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SRI RAMANA

The Sage of Arunagiri

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The Sage's Abode at Arunagiri
(*Sri Ramanasramam*)

BY

AKSHARAJNA

SRI RAMANA

The Sage of Arunagiri

(A brief life-sketch of the Sage and His Teachings)

BY

AKSHARAJNA

(G. R. Subbaramayya)

Published

BY

NIRANJANANANDA SWAMY

Sarvadhikari

SRI RAMANASRAMAM

TIRUVANNAMALAI

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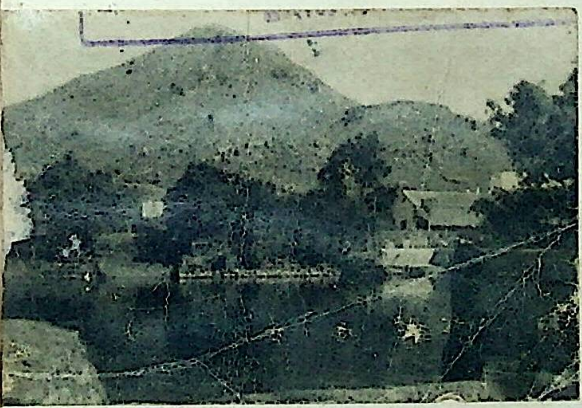

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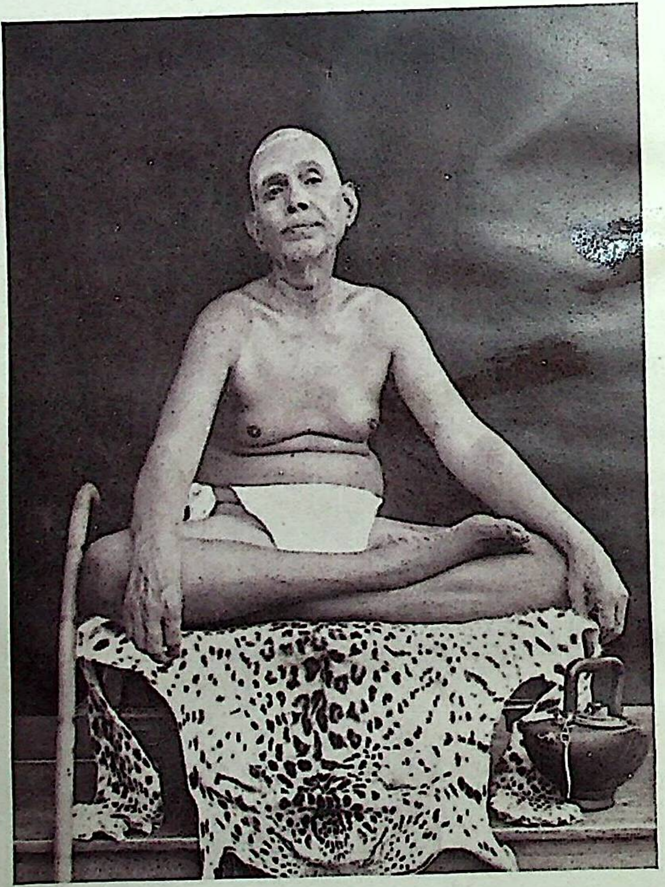

THE SAGE OF ARUNAGIRI

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SRI RAMANASRAMAM.
TIRUVANNAMALAI.

Om Namo Bhagavate Sri Ramana Murtaye

This Fresh Flower Offering is most respectfully
laid at the Feet of

BHAGAVAN SRI RAMANA MAHARSHI

as a humble token of devotion
by his most ardent disciple

AKSHARAJNA

(G. R. SUBBARAMAYYA)

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SAVANTS' HOMAGE UNTO THE SAGE

If the world is to be saved it can only be by the intrusion of another world into it, a world of higher truth and greater reality. Our failure to develope contact with this world of Reality is the cause of our malady. Men like SRI RAMANA recall us to that larger dimension of Reality to which we really belong.

Sir S. Radhakrishnan.

* * *

BHAGAVAN SRI RAMANA MAHARSHI is a significant answer to the world's cry for liberation.... He has renounced as valueless all that the modern world values most. His detachment is as complete as it is perfect. Nothing seems to possess the power to disturb his superb poise, his marvellous tranquillity and peace.... He has lived publicly for fifty years at the foot of Arunachala, that mystic Hill, the Heart of the world, the secret and sacred Heart-centre of Siva. That Hill is the only symbol, the only adequate representation of his spiritual realisation. ... There is little doubt that an ageless Wisdom, as old as the Heart of the Hill, aye even older than that, shines through those wonderful eyes which look with such deep compassion upon the suffering world.

B. Sanjiva Rao.

* * *

RAMANA MAHARSHI'S greatness is based on his actual living by the creed of the *Advaita Vedanta* which holds that Reality is One without a second, that everything in this universe is but that Reality which is Existence-Consciousness-Bliss. True to his creed, he regards nothing alien, none as other, no events undesirable. For him the ideal is the real and the real is the ideal.... Love, affection, kindness, mercy etc., which are expressions of one and the same thing, and the feeling of unity with all, ever flow from him. This is the secret of Maharshi's unique greatness and consequent popularity. The whole of humanity owes its homage to this great Sage amidst us.

Prof. B. L. Atreya.

* * *

I do not know what happened when I saw MAHARSHI for the first time, but the moment he looked at me, I felt he was the Truth and the Light.

Grant Duff.

* * *

I believe SRI MAHARSHI to be the greatest living interpreter, and indeed, in a sense, the fulfilment of modern psychology and psycho-analysis and that therefore he must be taken seriously even by Western or Eastern Materialists.

A. B. Richardson.

* * *

What we find in the life and teachings of SRI RAMANA is the purest of India; with its breath of world-liberated and liberating humanity, it is the chant of millenniums.

Dr. C. G. Jung.

FOREWORD

I deem it a pleasure and a privilege to write a foreword to this brief and bright book about a very great Personage. It is difficult to define Greatness, and it is yet more difficult to comprehend and evaluate supreme greatness in any field. The difficulty is greatest when we have to shed our petty but powerful passion of identity with our body which cuts the joyous Infinite into painful finiteness. And yet we must conquer the difficulty, at least in some measure as a matter of intellectual assent, if we wish to comprehend and evaluate the greatest spiritual genius known as BHAGAVAN *SRI RAMANA MAHARSHI*; I have met the Sage of Tiruvannamalai off and on, and after considerable intervals of time, a fact which, I flatter myself, has enabled me to combine the two somewhat inconsistent angles of vision *viz.*, attachment and detachment. I was first puzzled and then fascinated by him, as naturally happens when a person passionately seeking peace comes across one who has passed that probationary stage and has touched the innermost core of peace and found it to be not mere calmness but also radiance and rapture ; because those who reach the incandescent centre of things have

> " No shade of doubt,
> But utter clearness, and through loss of self
> The gain of such large Life as matched with ours
> Were Sun to spark unshadowable in words,
> Themselves but shadows of a shadow-world ! "

Sri Ramana Maharshi has had to pay the usual penalties of greatness, He has been pursued by many interpreters and admirers. Many have merely admired him and some have interpreted him, and very very few have understood him. That is inevitable in the case of a great genius of an unusual type, because how many are there or can there be, who feel an imperious inner urge for the realization of the Infinite while yet a boy? Sri Ramakrishna Paramahamsa had a similar urge. An admirer from the West has given a luminous pen-picture of the Sage as he found him at the first interview: "His body is supernaturally quiet, as steady as a statue. Not once does he catch my gaze, for his eyes contrive to look into remote space, and infinitely remote it seems." The writer then interrogates himself: "Does this man, the Maharshi, emanate the perfume of spiritual peace as the flower emanates fragrance from its petals?" He eventually gets a kinship of mood which enables him to glimpse Maharshi's mood and says, "I have drunk the platonic cup of Lethe, so that yesterday's bitter memories and tomorrow's anxious cares have disappeared completely. I have attained divine liberty and an almost indescribable felicity, for I understand in the deepest possible way that to know all is not merely to pardon all, but to love all. My heart is remoulded in rapure."*

If thus a person who was born in **alien milieu** can enter into a new mood as remote as it is rapturous and as rapturous as it is remote, we can expect Hindu disciples to show a clear and convincing comprehension. And in fact this class of literature has grown to vast proportions. Mr. B. V. Narasimha Swamy has given us an intimate study. The present author who hides himself behind the mysterious and magnificent name *Aksharajna* has entered very deeply into the spirit of the great Master. He gives to us clear and bright picture of the robust boyhood of the Master. But even in such boyhood the passion of meditation brought its unusual and rapturous interruptions of the normal life. The boy exercised a strange fascination over all who met him. The casual hearing of the word *ARUNACHALAM* fanned some unknown central heat in him into flame, and he fled from his temporary home to this eternal Home where he lives in the fulness of Peace to-day. The author has narrated the story of the great awakening in a gripping way.

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* Paul Brunton in *A Search in Secret India*—published by M/s. Rider & Co., London.

Romain Rolland says that in Europe such a child would be placed in a mental hospital. But India—to use the language of the Gita—knows that what is darkness to all beings is radiance to the *Samyami*. The author appropriately adds to his work a brief but comprehensive exposition of the teachings of the Sage, adopting, as far as possible, the same expression and language used in other books published by the Asramam, thus representing accurately the different aspects of the Eternal Truth, of which the Sage of Arunagiri is himself the living Embodiment.

The work is thus attractive and illuminating. It brings before my mind's eye very vividly the Maharshi as I saw him a few months ago during the Karthigai Deepam season, sitting on his couch with eyes Visioning the Light of lights which is inside the inside and yet beyond the beyond, while the surging crowds poured in and bowed and sat in reverential awe, a subtle incense spread all round us, and the full moon shone at its zenith in the azure sky.

MADRAS,
5th March 1937.

(Sd.) K. S. RAMASWAMY SASTRY, B.A., B.L.
Dewan Bahadur
Retired District Judge.

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SRI RAMANA

The Sage of Arunagiri

It is attempted herein to give the reader an account of the leading characteristics and incidents of the life of Bhagavan Sri Ramana Maharshi, who now adorns Tiruvannamalai (Arunagiri or Arunachala, in Sanscrit), a small Municipality in the present North Arcot District. The brief exposition of his teachings is intended merely to direct the reader to the original teachings of the Sage as contained in the books published by Sri Ramanasramam, the present abode of the Sage.

* * *

In the latter part of the nineteenth century, there lived in the village of Tiruchuli (*or*, Tiruchuzhi which means literally the sacred Cypher, representing *Sabda Brahma*[1]), about thirty miles south of Madura, a Brahmin couple, Sundaram Aiyar (*lit*: the Beautiful Sire) and Alagamma (*lit*: Madame Beautiful) by name. Devoted, pious and loving, the latter had the personality to mould the character of her children. She was a very devout woman, a sort of Hindu St. Elizabeth, fasting, giving alms to the poor and nursing the sick. She was the right hand of her husband. Sundaram Aiyar, who was also pious and God-fearing, was following the legal profession and was in fairly affluent circumstances; and, without entertaining the 'sordid lust of pelf' he spent all his ancestral and self-earned income in doing good to humanity.

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[1] प्रणवेन जगद्व्याप्तम् "The whole world is pervaded by *Pranava*" (Jnanotthama.) "In the beginning there was the word, the word was with God, the word was God" St. John's Gospel, I. 1

The virtues of charity, goodness and non-attachment are ingrained in the members of this family. One of Sundaram Aiyar's grand-uncles donned the *gerrua* (the seamless ochre-coloured robe), and with the staff and bowl in hand 'looked upon the world as his oyster.' Sundaram Aiyar's elder brother, Venkatesa Aiyar, years ago started from the village professing to visit Tirupparamkunram and never came home again. Nor could any know where he went, though it was said later on that he was once seen at Chidambaram, engaged in removing the weeds and thorns from the grounds of the outer courts of the temple to keep them soft for the tread of pilgrims and visitors to the shrine. He was a *Sannyasin* of the advanced type and a great *Bhakta* who spent his time in incessant prayer.

The temple of Bhuminatheswara and Sahayamba at Tiruchuli was resorted to by a constant stream of *bhaktas* from far and near at all seasons of the year, and more especially in the month of *Margasirsha*, during the festival of *Arudra-darsanam.* At 1 a.m. on the *Arudradarsanam* day of the year, *Pramadi* (corresponding to the 30th of December, 1879), when God Siva of the Temple procession stood at the tower entrance, when the asterism *Punarvasu* was in the ascendant in *Tula rasi*, Alagamma gave birth to a soul-entrancing boy, who was afterwards named Venkataramana. He was the second of her three boys, Nagasami being the first and Nagasundaram the last.[2]

Of all those who, by their own efforts and without any usurpation of the rights of others, have raised themselves to the acme of perfection,—the State of Realization through Renunciation, the Goal of human evolution—there is no one whose history presents so great a continuity from its commencement as that of Venkataramana, universally known as BHAGAVAN SRI RAMANA MAHARSHI. Ever since his birth he had 'latent mental modifications' of Lord Arunachala, sure to become potent at no distant date. Though he did not exactly know who, what and where Arunachala is, his heart panted after Him, even "as the hart panteth after water-brooks." The thought of the Lord was ingrained in him. He lived, moved and had his being in Arunachala. He lisped Arunachala and he became the speaking Embodiment of Lord Arunachala.

From his very birth Venkataramana exerted a fascinating influence upon his parents and others. Fair, charming, and always smiling, he soon became 'the cynosure of neighbouring eyes.' It may well be said that the Wordsworthian saying "Child is father of the man" proved true in his case. For the great ancient evolutionist, Patanjali, declares[3] that the true secret of evolution is the manifestation of Perfection which is already there in a potential condition in every being, that his Perfection is merely barred, while the infinite tide behind struggles to express itself. This struggle is but the result of our ignorance, because we do not know the proper way to unlock the gates that let in the flood. This infinite tide behind must express itself. Venkataramana grew up into a robust boy and his exquisite grace pleased everybody. He soon became a leader of boys of equal age and, sometimes of his seniors too. As he was of a very active temperament, his father thought it unwise to allow him to indulge in his boyish "Quips and Cranks and Wanton Wiles," and sent him to the village school, where he soon became a pet to both the pupils and the teacher. He learnt the three Rs at Tiruchuli and Dindigul. Later on he reached Madura and joined the Scott's Middle School and afterwards the Mission High School. Often on bright moon-lit nights he and his comrades, unseen by their elders, would go to the river Vaigai and play on the sand dunes there till 3 or 4 a.m. Then they would wend their way homeward and silently rest themselves on their beds, as if nothing had happened the previous night to check the regular course of human life.

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[2] The house in which Venkataramana was born, was built by Sundaram Aiyar. After his death it was lost to the family, but has been recently acquired by Sri Ramanasramam with the generous help of devotees, and is now maintained as a temple of worship, known as SRI SUNDARA MANDIRAM.

[3] See next page.

During the holidays he would go with a number of boys of his age who were strong in limb to a hill close to the town, for recreation purposes, free from the babblings of a busy world. He would jump from rock to rock over deep ravines. He was skilled in boxing, wrestling and other manly sports, which he would practise with his

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[3] जात्यन्तरपरिणामः प्रकृत्यापूरात् ।
निमित्तमप्रयोजकं प्रकृतीनां वरणभेदस्तु ततः क्षेत्रिकवत् ॥

Yoga Aphorisms iv. 2 & 3.

friends. He would teach his playmates how to escape in times of danger and emergency. His feats were so quick and daring that it would appear he cared a fig for life. The whole batch would proceed to the big lake adjoining the hill, but he would invariably go ahead of them to jump in and swim across the waters. When the Vaigai was in loud torrents, he would boldly swim across the rapid river amidst whirlpools, when it would appear dangerous even for an expert swimmer to ford it. Many a time and oft he was drawn into the vortices of deep encircling whirlpools, but with an effort he would get free from them and swim to the opposite bank. In sports like these he spent his boyhood and none would have dreamed that, under ordinary circumstances, a lad so volatile, so fond of mirth and youthful jollity, and apparently so little drawn to the higher aspects of life, would shortly become a Mahapurusha[4] shining as a lodestar to many a man seeking freedom from the bondage of world.[5]

He showed no aptitude at all for the acquisition of mere book-lore, though he was bright and could have easily taken high rank in the class. He was not without determination and effort, but he did not care to apply himself to the lessons taught at school. Though he would somehow get through his examinations, his progress was not considered satisfactory either by his teachers or guardians. Venkataramana's mind, which had a peculiar aversion to the study of English Grammar, Algebra and Geometry, did not feel particularly attracted towards the higher problems of life. In any case, he was not for the acquisition of that kind of learning for which parents generally send their boys to school, the learning intended for earning a livelihood. At Madura when he casually saw a copy of *Periyapuranam* and read it, he was enraptured by the ideal of selfless devotion that inspired the lives of the Saints therein described. Without his knowing it, the study of this book threw him into deep meditation.

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[4] The Great Self.

[5] The powers that work in a Mukta Purusha are cosmic and, therefore, his conduct more often baffles our moral estimate by its overpoweringness and incalculability. The *Chandogya* gives a description of the complete autonomy of will of the Liberated Souls. Their will is unfailingly effective, not only on the physical but also on the psychic and higher planes of existence. It is immediately creative: and in this respect has supernatural bent, in as much as it does not require the intervention of any other thing to give it proper shape and effective expression. Though this autonomy of will is a source of uncommon power, Liberated Souls do not disturb the cosmic harmony, because the world-harmony reflects the greatest wisdom and highest power of Iswara.

But the chief characteristic of the boy was his fascinating influence over everybody he came into contact with. The boys with whom he 'deported on the margent green',—though they were in constant dread of him in his waking hours,—could not bear the pangs of separation from him even for a minute. Only during his sleeping hours would they dare to handle him roughly in playful vengeance. In play and games a sturdy and fearless boy, in intellectual pursuits an aristocrat, in active life a kind and generous friend of one and all, was Venkataramana, unique amongst his companions.

This state of affairs did not last long. His schoolboy activity gave place to tranquillity and indifference to all mundane matters. But when one thinks of the robust schoolboy Venkataramana, about to enter the realm of spiritual life, one is tempted to recall the advice given by

Swami Vivekananda to his Alwar disciples :—" Above all, be strong and manly ! Physical weakness is the cause of at least one-third of our miseries."

It is said "From sixteen to eighteen is an awkward age." It is regarded as the age when a boy or girl rises to man's or woman's stature. All Hindu parents carefully watch their children at this critical period. It is the period for the 'blossoming' of the *Antahkarana* (internal sense). Nature is yet pliant and soft. Habits have not as yet established their domain. Whatever direction is then given to one's desires and passions, it is most likely to continue.

"Youth, therefore, is the most appropriate time for one to renounce. It is the fresh and unsmelt flower that is laid at the feet of the Lord."

It was in or about the month of November 1895, that the 'unconscious cerebration' Venkataramana had of Lord Arunachala raised its head. That latent thought or feeling acted as a 'spur to prick the sides of intent'. One day while going to school, he met an elderly relation of his on the way. As a previous acquaintance in childhood, the youth accosted the relative with the usual question, "Whence are you coming?" "From Arunachalam" was the laconic reply. But as soon as the word "ARUNACHALAM" fell on the ears of Venkataramana, he had a vision of Something Great and Magnificent. His mortal eyes were closed to all external things, and for a moment he remained transfixed to the spot. When soon he regained normal consciousness, he exclaimed with evident bewilderment "What, from Arunachalam! Where is it?" The relative, though surprised, pitied his youthful ignorance and softly replied

"Don't you know Tiruvannamalai? That is Arunachalam." The spark that glowed for a time in the youth's breast seemed to be chilled by the reply; really it was the calm that precedes the storm.

The Great Awakening that converted Venkataramana's listless life into one of lofty realization and devotion to ideals, came about the middle of 1896. The Great Transformation may be stated substantially in his own words. "It was about six weeks before I left Madura for good that the great change in my life took place. It was so sudden. One day I sat up alone on the first floor of my uncle's house. I was in my usual good health. But a sudden and unmistakable fear of death seized me. I felt I was going to die, and at once set about thinking what I should do. I did not care to consult anyone, be he a doctor, elder or friend. I felt I had to solve the problem myself then and there. The shock of the fear of death made me at once introspective or 'introverted'. I said to myself mentally, i. e., without uttering the words, 'Now death is come, what does it mean? Who is it that is dying? This body dies.' I at once dramatized the situation. I extended my limbs and held them rigid, as though *rigor-mortis* (death stiffening) had set in. I imitated a corpse to lend an air of reality to my further investigation. I held my breath and kept my mouth closed, pressing the lips tightly together, so that no sound could escape. 'Well then,' said I to myself, 'this body is dead. It will be carried stiff to the crematory and there burnt and reduced to ashes. But with the death of the body am "I" dead? Is the body "I"? This body is silent and inert. But I am still aware of the full force of my personality and even of the sound of "I" within myself, as apart from the body. So "I" am a

Spirit transcending the body. The material body dies, but the Spirit transcending it cannot be touched by death. I am, therefore, the deathless Spirit.' All this was not a feat of intellectual gymnastics, but came as a flash before me vividly as living TRUTH, something which I perceived immediately, without any argument almost. "I" was something very real, the only real thing in that state, and all the conscious activity that was connected with my body was centred on that. The "I" or myself was holding the focus of attention with a powerful fascination. *Fear of death vanished at once and for ever. The absorption in the Self has continued from that moment right up to now.*"[6]

That is what Patanjali calls *Nirvikalpa* or *Asamprajnata* or *Nirbeeja Samadhi*, to attain which Sages spent their whole lives or series of lives; as the Gita says "It is the result of the toil of many lives."[7]

This *Nirvikalpa Samadhi,* this Great Ecstasy, is the absolute transfixing and transformation of the human personality into Divinity. It is the falling into pieces of the very foundations of personality, the tremendous bursting of Effulgence which annihilates all the darkness due to sense and thought. It is the drowning and dissolution of personality in the Ocean of Pure Being, which is the All. Like the awesome stillness after a violent tropical storm, like the majestic silence reigning in the glorious solitude of mountain fastness, like the great stillness of the sea after a mad breaking of the waves with thundering noise on rocky shores, like the eternal silence of the stars, and like unto the peace of all these, is the inexpressible State of *Nirvikalpa Samadhi.* The body is lifeless. So is the mind. *Samadhi* is one, unbroken Stillness. It is the all-surpassing Stillness, that side of *Maya.* On this side, the structure of thought and form built through the time and effort of innumerable lives, tumbles to pieces, into a heap of ruin. It is the breaking down of the ridgepole of that tabernacle of thought and form in which the soul has made its abode for unaccountable ages. But on the other side of *Maya*, it is Effulgence, Sublime Effulgence, the Infinite Effulgence of Pure Being. When the phenomenon of personality becomes extinct, that which eternally IS, alone remains. That is BRAHMAN.

---

[6] The particular house (now No. 11, Chokkappa Naicken St.) in Madura, in which young Venkataramana had this transcendental Experience of the 'I' Eternal, has been acquired recently for Sri Ramanasramam, and is now maintained as a place of worship and pilgrimage. It is known as SRI RAMANA MANDIRAM.

[7] अनेकजन्मसंसिद्धः

This is the goal, the seeing,—the knowing which is vision,—the seeing and knowing which are the actual *becoming*, and, finally the actual Being. The youthful Maharshi attained this goal. The State of Super-Consciousness is what he sought of Lord Arunachala. To feel and be one with the Divinity within; to find the whole of nature erazed from the tablets of perception; to deny the 'little-I' which creates bondage; to destroy any and every objective characteristic and attitude of individual being; to plunge into the Ocean of True, Universal Being beyond thought, and to realize it as identical with the Self,—such was his prayer to the Lord.

After this event a definite change came over the schoolboy life of Venkataramana. His attention was so powerfully drawn to the Self within, that life and its activity ceased to interest him; and he lost even the superficial contact he had with his companions. Often times he would sit alone, close his eyes and soon be lost in the all-absorbing concentration on himself. He would seldom miss an opportunity to shove aside his books, to shirk the petty social duties and sit up in his congenial occupation of *Atma-dhyana*. The only thing that had any attraction for him besides such meditation, was his almost invariable, daily visit to Meenakshisundareswara temple. He would go alone and stand for a long time before Siva, Meenakshi, Nataraja or before the august array of the sixty-three Saints, in silent prayer for the descent of Lord's Grace. Free from thought and speech while he stood in silent prayer before His Lord, tears would gush down his cheeks in torrents. He had no use for words to commune with the Supreme Being; and the thought of seeking consolation from worldly things or attaining worldly objectives was completely absent from his mind. Indeed, it was this experience of Bliss of the ever-present Self within, that expressed itself as silent prayer to the Lord for the descent of His Grace. Because, young Venkataramana knew little about theology and religion, and nothing of philosophy and its theories about Brahman, *Maya, samsara* etc. In this context of Venkataramana's new life we can understand the true meaning of Hamilton's famous dictum, "A learned ignorance is the end of all philosophy and the beginning of Religion." Moreover, through the death-experience, the youth had found that the path to the discovery of the Real Self lies through the crucifixion of selfishness on selflessness. It did not take long for him to recognize the unsuitability of his Madura home for the task he was intent on. These far-reaching changes which came over Venkataramana's life coupled with the chastisement he received from his brother, uncle and teacher for the neglect of his studies, pointed to the coming of the crisis.

The crisis did actually come on Saturday, 29th August 1896, that is, four years after the demise of his father, when he lived under his paternal uncle's roof at Madura. He had failed to study properly some lesson in Bain's Higher English Grammar, and was given as imposition to copy that lesson thrice. When he did some part of this soulless job, he got disgusted with it and could go no further. He quietly put aside the books and sat bolt upright for his congenial meditation. His brother, who happened to be there, turned out to be an unconscious agent of Lord Arunachala. With intent to make the younger brother mend his ways, the elder one remarked sarcastically "Why should one who behaves thus retain all this?" The rebuke was that one, who would put aside the books with such easy indifference and take to meditation, need not make a show of undergoing a course of study in a high school. The shot went home. "Yes," thought Venkataramana, "What my brother says is the bare truth. What business have I here any longer?" Forthwith the innate thought of Arunachala came to the fore and wholly absorbed him. Immediately he got up from his seat of meditation and told his brother that he had to go to school at noon to attend a special class on electricity, when the latter asked the former to take five rupees from the box below and pay the latter's college-fees. Here was another instance of help from the Unseen. Venkataramana went downstairs to take his meal. But when his cousin-sister served the meal he could hardly relish even the first morsel of food.

Some silent emotion had already begun to work within the youthful breast of Venkataramana, and his eyes were red as fire with weeping! He left unfinished his meal, but took five rupees from the box. He hastily turned over the pages of an antiquated school atlas, which did not disclose the new branch line opened in 1892 and running from Villupuram to Katpadi via Tiruvannamalai. He thought that Tindivanam must be the nearest railway station to Tiruvannamalai; and surmising that three rupees would suffice to take him to Tindivanam, left the balance of two rupees with a slip of paper in a conspicuous corner of the box. He did not attend the class but went straight to the railway station. His heart "did not drag at each remove a lengthening chain." Indeed, the chain of bondage was rent asunder. *What was then a seeming loss to the family was destined to become an immense gain to the whole, wide world.* The parting note on the slip of paper (which Providence has preserved to this day) runs thus:—

I have, in search of my Father, according to His command, started from this place. On a virtuous enterprise indeed has this embarked. Therefore, for this act none need grieve; nor to trace this out need money be spent.

Your College-fees
yet not paid. Rs. 2
are herewith.

Thus,

—— —— —— —— ——

The note throws a lucid light on the question of all absorbing interest, namely:—what was Venkataramana's state of mind when he left Madura for good and what was the ethical and spiritual progress he had already made? The outstanding features are:—

Venkataramana was fully conscious of a Divine Command; it came from his Father. That command he implicitly obeyed. The purpose was noble, he was quite sure; it was a thing which should make one happy and not cause grief. Since there could be no turning back once the hand was set to the plough, why make a search? And for whom was the search, when the one sought had become merged in the Nameless One? Glory be unto them that have such conviction! The immortal words of Pascal, "Thou wouldst not have looked for ME if thou hast not found ME" are never so true as for those who, possessed by the hidden God, surrender unto Him with a happy heart in order to fulfil the secret mission with which they are charged.

"This was the *Great Departure*. Like a diver he plunged into the Ocean of Cosmic Consciousness, and that Ocean covered his track. Among its flotsam and jetsam he seemed nothing more than one nameless youth among a thousand others. But the fires of Genius burned in his eyes."

Venkataramana reached the railway station at twelve noon. The train, which was timed to arrive at 11-45 a.m. was late that day by over an hour. Here was yet another proof of Providence smiling on his enterprise. He looked up the fare to Tindivanam in the fare-lists suspended near the booking-counter, and found it to be rupees two and annas thirteen. He did not care to look a few lines lower down and see that Tiruvannamalai was itself a railway station and that the fare to it was three rupees, which was just the amount he took with him to the station. He purchased a ticket for Tindivanam, tied the balance of three annas in the hem of his garment, got into a compartment and became wrapped in deep meditation. He had no burden to carry, physical or mental; there was nothing for him to be anxious about. He had all the security and peace of mind, which the absence of worldly possessions and the presence of the Lord within could give. He was blind and deaf to what passed around him, and did not care for the cheap acquaintance with fellow passengers. In his compartment was an old Moulvi (*i. e.* a Mohammedan religious scholar) with a long, grey beard, freely discoursing with other passengers on the lives and sayings of many a saint. He saw the Brahmin youth fully absorbed in himself and not participating in the discourse. He broke the ice and asked "Whither are you going, Swami?" "To Tiruvannamalai" was the laconic reply. "I am also going there" said the Moulvi. "What! to Tiruvannamalai?" asked the Swami. "No, to the next station" said the Moulvi. "Which is the next station? queried the Swami. "Tirukoilur" the Moulvi replied. "What! does the train go to Tiruvannamalai?" asked the innocent youth, a little bewildered. "A strange passenger you are to be sure" said the Moulvi. "What route should I take?" queried again the youth. "Via Villupuram" replied the Moulvi. Evidently, it was some divine personage that appeared in the guise of the Moulvi, in order to direct the youth on his way to Tiruvannamalai. For, the old man, who offered to go up to Tiruvannamalai and beyond, quietly disappeared in a short time and was never seen again.

Venkataramana, who had thus come to know the route, sank back into deep meditation, which kept off the imperious sensations of hunger and thirst. It was only when the train reached Trichinopoly Junction at eventide, that he felt their pinch. He purchased two stone-pears and tried to eat one of them. Hardly had he swallowed a bit when his hunger was appeased and, to his surprise, he felt disinclined to eat more. The train reached Villupuram at 3 a.m. the next morning, and he alighted there. At dawn he perambulated the streets of the town, found a mess-house which he entered, and asked the proprietor for food. He was told to wait till noon for his meal. The youth sat on the pial (that is, a raised verandah before the main entrance of the house), and was soon absorbed in himself. The hotel-keeper watched with curiosity the Brahmin youth with fair complexion, long, black locks, ruby-set ear-rings, a face beaming with intelligence, with no worldly goods of any sort and sitting at ease, heedless of what was passing outside, wrapt in Samadhi from early hours in the morning till meal time in the noon. After the meal, when two annas were offered by the lad, the proprietor asked him "How much money have you?" "Only two annas and a half" came the straight reply. "Keep it yourself" said the proprietor sympathetically.

Venkataramana started immediately to the railway station. With the little money he had he purchased a ticket to Mambalapattu, which place he reached that evening. He then walked on for about ten miles reaching Araianinallur by sunset. Not being accustomed to walk such a long distance at one stretch, he felt jaded and exhausted. He sat quietly in front of the temple of Sri Atulyanatheswara. A little later came the temple *archaka*, cook and others to perform the evening *puja* to the Deity. Opening the doors of the temple they went in. The young Saint, Venkataramana, followed them and sat in a corner near the Holy of Holies. Meditation had by then become his natural state; on the swift wings of the spiritual ecstasy that entranced him from the moment he left his home at the command of his Father, he flew above *Dhyana* and *Dharana* and beyond them into *Samadhi*, where thought itself is dead and all sense of separateness is destroyed; where man that was becomes the GOD that IS. Venkataramana had then a Vision of a dazzling Light emanating from himself and enveloping him. It grew effulgent, and his mind merged into it. What then transpired in that State of Super-Consciousness is beyond expression. The highest Consciousness had come upon him, of its own accord. The *Effulgence* came with such *Omnipotence* that it absorbed the consciousness of personality; and the "I" in him became merged in Divinity. The exalted State of Transpersonality is by its nature incomprehensible to the mind and inexpressible in words. The spot on which the young Saint Venkataramana sat, where he had the Vision of Inner Light, was the very spot on which Saint Tirujnana Sambandar installed the Deity, Arunachaleswara. This is the way in which Saints and Sages have had the shower of *Jnana* of Perennial Bliss, known as *Dharmamegha Samadhi*[8]. When the feeling of ecstasy passes away and is lost in a higher equanimity, there occurs the State called *Dharmamegha*, in which the Isolation of the Self, its complete severance from insentient matter (the body), is realized; and *karma* operates no more. According to Vedanta it is the State in which Wisdom expresses itself in the form of virtuous Ideas based on universal perception and eternal values, and flowing in the clearest manner. It is called *Dharma-megha*, because it is full of *Dharma* or Truth and Righteousness, just as clouds are full of rain. *Dharma-megha* thus showers its blessings on the lower planes of feeling, mind and intellect, while the Sage himself remains transcendent, basking, as it were, in the light of the Eternal Sun of Pure Being, raised above all reflections (that is, thought-activity ranging from perception to deep contemplation) and beyond all the *karmas*. Contemplators call this the highest intellection (*prasamkhyanam*). The *Effulgence* seen by the young Sage may be considered also as an objective vision of God. When he opened his mortal eyes to see if the Light had come from the *Sanctum Sanctorum* and went in, he saw nothing more than a stone image of the Deity set within stone walls of the temple.

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[8] Patanjali:—धर्ममेघः समाधिः "Samadhi (which is) the rain cloud of (all) Virtues" iv. 29.

When Venkataramana came out of the *Samadhi*, hunger pressed him hard. He was not accustomed to ask anything of anybody; however, he approached the temple cook for a morsel of food, who directed him to the *archaka*. By then the evening ritual of temple worship was over, and Venkataramana was asked to come out along with others, so that the temple doors might be closed. The priest and others, closing the doors, started for the Kilur temple which was about six furlongs away, in order to conduct *puja* there also. Venkataramana accompanied the party and on reaching the Kilur temple fell again into a state of Self-absorption, from which he was roused by the priest who wanted to close the doors. The temple drummer, who had all along been watching the youth, said to the *archaka* "Give him my share of *prasadam*." It was accordingly given. The youth was then led to a Sastry's house close by to get some drinking water. But before it could be fetched, he fell into a state of deep *Samadhi*, which was rapidly forming itself into a fixed habit. When he regained normal consciousness, he found himself at some distance from where he originally stood, with his food scattered and a crowd watching him intently. He picked up some of the scattered food but could eat only a little. The next morning he went to the house of one Muthukrishna Aiyar, a Brahmin Bhagavathar and asked him for a meal He was referred to the dame inside. The good lady rejoiced to see the lad arrive on the day of Sri Krishna's nativity (for, that was the *Janmashtami* day), gave him a bounteous rural repast and insisted on his eating it all despite his satiety. He then went to the Bhagavathar and, in order to get the necessary railway fare, offered to pledge his gold ear-rings for rupees four. The Bhagavathar at first hesitated, but finally advanced him the amount. Before he left the house, the good dame who fed him sumptuously gave him a packet of sweets which were part of the *naivedya* she was yet to offer to the household deity. Then the youth wended his way to the railway station, where he had to wait till next morning for his train to Tiruvannamalai, which he reached on the first day of September, 1896.

On the fourth day after he left Madura, he alighted at Tiruvannamalai station, and beheld from afar his 'promised land' with the Hill of Arunagiri rising majestically from earth to heaven. There at the foot of the Hill he saw the magnificent edifice of oriental design, with its towers and symbolic spires tapering into the sky, grey with age and surrounded by an atmosphere of ancient dignity akin to a Venerable Presence before which one would find peace and inward joy. For Venkataramana, who from early childhood had been 'unconsciously conscious' of Arunachala, the whole place vibrated with a mystical, spiritual fire, with which he felt strangely familiar.

He rode sublime
Upon the Seraph Wings of Ecstasy.
The Secrets of Abyss to spy.
He passed the flaming bounds of place and time;
The Living Throne, the Saphire Blaze,—
Where angels tremble while they gaze,—
He saw."

With lightness of foot and exhilaration of spirit, with the 'rich stream of Ecstasy winding along, deep, majestic, smooth and strong', he proceeded to the great temple. The doors of the three outer enclosures and those of the *Sanctum Sanctorum* were all wide open, though no person could be seen anywhere on his way into the interior of the temple; it seemed as if the Lord was thus preparing to welcome His 'Much Beloved Son', who marched straight to the innermost Sanctuary, the Holy of Holies, without let or hindrance, and stood before Lord Arunachala and said

"O Lord! here have I come, obedient to Thy call;
Thou canst use me in the way Thou pleasest."

That moment the youth was 'Trans-humanized into God', and reached the Realm of Perennial Bliss of Life, Ever-lasting and of Glory Never-ending. He felt as one with God. *Beata Solitude Sola Beatitude*[9]. From that moment all sense of duality vanished for ever. He became the Liberated One.

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[9] Blessed Solitude, the only Blessedness.

In his *Vivekachudamani* Sri Sankaracharya says :—

" Neither by Yoga, nor by Sankhya, nor by work, nor by learning, but by realization of one's identity with Brahman is Liberation possible, and by no other means. For one bitten by the serpent of *ajnana* (nescience) the only medicine is knowledge of Brahman ; of what use are the Vedas and Scriptures, Mantras and other medicines? The Supreme Brahman is like the sky, pure, absolute, infinite, motionless and changeless, devoid of interior and exterior, devoid of otherness, the One without a second, and is one's own Self. Is there any other object of knowledge ? To realize oneself as the Self of the whole universe is the means of getting rid of bondage ; and there is nothing higher than the realization of one's identity with the whole universe. This is attained by excluding the objective world through steadfast abidance in the Self Universal. Brahman alone is, the One without a second, the Essence of Existence, Consciousness and Bliss Eternal, and devoid of activity ; there is no duality whatsoever in it. Brahman alone is, the One without a second, which is the Self of all, homogeneous, perfect, infinite and all pervading; there is no duality whatsover in It. Brahman alone is, the One without a second, the Reality in perfection, self-existent, pure, intelligent and incomparable ; there is no duality whatsoever in It. In the one *Sadvastu,* full unto perfection, motionless like the ocean, changeless, formless and absolute without qualities, whence can there be diversity? In the great Ocean of Brahman filled with the nectar of Bliss Absolute, what is to be shunned and what accepted, where is the other and where is difference ? He who through his Illumination never knows any difference between the Self and Brahman, and between Brahman and the universe, is known as *Jeevanmukta.*"[10]

The total loss of the sense of difference and differentiation is a grand and noble trait in the character of the Great Ones, who witness everything good or bad, sunshine or rain, with the same vision and with an equanimity of temper which is comparable only to the ocean, which neither swells because so many rivers flow into it, nor dries up because its vast expanse is exposed to the sun.

Like a flash is presented to the *Jnani's* Consciousness a clear vision of the meaning and drift of the universe. He does not merely believe but sees and knows that the Cosmos, which to the self-conscious individual seems to be made up of dead matter, is verily a Living Presence. He sees that, instead of men being as it were patches of life scattered through an infinite sea of inert substance, they are, in reality, specks of death in an infinite Ocean of Life. He sees that man's true Being is eternal,[11] that Atman alone exists and nothing else and that it is one's own Self. The Enlightened One learns in a few seconds that which no study has ever taught or can teach. Especially does he obtain such a conception of the whole as dwarfs all imagination inherent to ordinary, self-conscious, multifarious, individual existence, and makes all intellectual attempts to understand the universe in the light of the mind as petty and ridiculous.

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[10] Verses 56, 61, 393, 339, 465, 466, 370, 401, 484 & 439 of *Vivekachuḍamani.*

[11] *Ṣkandopanishad* 6 स जीवः केवलः शिवः ।

In the spirit of *Mundakopanishad* this truth may be expressed as follows :—

"When a man attains Cosmic Consciousness, all the knots or grasping desires of the heart (all the veils that hide the mystery of the universe from his inward gaze) are rent asunder, all his doubts are dispelled and all his *karmas* perish; his vision being rendered keen, he knows in a flash that which no study ever did or could teach him."[12]

After returning from the temple Venkataramana walked to the Aiyyankulam (tank), where on the steps he threw away the packet of sweets saying "To this block (that is, the body) why give any sweetmeat?" Truly the physical body has become a futile appendage to the Light of Pure Being he realized spontaneously. Before he re-entered the temple some one accosted him saying "You want your tuft of hair to be removed, eh?" On replying in the affirmative, he was forthwith taken to a barber and had his head clean shaven. He then removed his sacerdotal thread (*yajnopavita*). This was a sign of his parting for ever with all the vanities of the world, that he had risen above the realms of *Bhuh*, *Bhuvah* and *Suvah*, and of his being established in the life of the Spirit. He tore a piece of his cloth and wearing it as a codpiece (*kaupina*) cast away the rest along with the balance of three rupees and a half he had with him.[13]

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[12] भिद्यते हृदयग्रन्थिश्छिद्यन्ते सर्वसंशयाः ।
क्षीयन्ते चास्यकर्माणि तस्मिन्दृष्टे परावरे ॥ II. ii. 8.

[13] समलोष्टाश्मकाञ्चनः who treats mud, stone and gold equally alike. (*Bhagavad-gita*)
Cf. 'Let none admire
That riches grow in Hell, that soil may best
Deserve the precious bane'—Milton, *Paradise Lost* Bk. 1, lines 690-2.

He consequently became not a *Sannyasin*, (for he was indifferent to formal adoption of *Sannyasa*, and, perhaps, even the thought of it did not enter his mind) but an *Avadhuta*. An *Avadhuta* is one who has become an embodiment of that *Vairagya* (Dispassion) which is synonymous with *Jnana* (Knowledge), .who has reached the pinnacle of spiritual attainment, that is, has realized the Self, who, therefore, has risen above all the associations of the world, who has rent asunder the chains of birth and death, for whom all the bondages of *karma* are destroyed, who has become one with the Eternal truth and who is submerged in the Ocean of Perennial Bliss. The word, *Avadhuta*, is made up of four letters, *a*, *va*, *dhu*, and *ta*. Each letter has its own significance, and the meaning of the word consists of the combined significance of the four letters. The first letter, *a*, stands for *aksharatva* or imperishability; *va* stands for *varenyatva* or acme of perfection; *dhu* stands for *dhuta-samsara-bandhana* or the shattering of the trammels of *samsara*; and *ta* stands for *tattvamasyadi lakshyatva* or the realization of the Truth conveyed by *tattvamasi* (That thou art) etc. *mahavakyas* [14].

Ever since the young Sage went into the temple of Arunachala, unswerving abidance in the Bliss of Atman has become his one constant attitude. His outward life for several months to come was peculiarly uncommon. "In Europe" as Romain Rolland observes, "the case would have been fore-doomed, and the child would have been placed in a lunatic asylum under a daily douche of psychotherapy. Consciously day by day the flame would have been quenched.... The magic-lantern would have been no more. The candle is dead. Sometimes the child also dies." In India, the land of Sages, it is however otherwise; here the Sage is venerated for having realized That for which all else exists. The place at which, in the first instance, Venkataramana sat in meditation within the temple precincts was the raised dais in the thousand-pillared *mantapam*, the dais on which the Idol of Sri Nataraja is placed on certain festival occasions before being taken in procession round the temple. He soon found that a better place for spiritual communion would be the pit-like cave in the same hall. He would be left undisturbed, because no one would willingly get into the pit. Thus undisturbed the young Sage should have spent several days, quite unconscious of the world and its existence. So totally unaware was he of his physical being and its surroundings that while he was immersed in *Samadhi* in the cave of *Patala Linga*, vermin and blood-sucking insects, the rightful denizens of that damp, dark pit, ate away the lower part of his thighs. The temple *Sadhus* (mendicants) tried to rouse him out of his state of Self-absorption, but it was all of no avail. His body had to be carried stiff in its sitting posture, and it was deposited near the Subramanya temple. Later, he moved to different parts of the bigger temple and its gardens. But these states of Super-consciousness recurred day after day, reducing the physical body to a condition of temporary petrifaction and suspended animation. This kind of physical existence brought about physical troubles in its train. Moreover, he was utterly indifferent to the physical needs of the body; he just gulped down what was brought to his mouth by the *Sadhus* of the temple: that was his only food for the day, and his only raiment was the cod-piece round the loins. Some months later he went to Gurumurtham. Even there his food consisted of just a cup of milk mixed with miscellaneous fruits, given once a day. Except for the few minutes when he went out to answer the calls of nature, all the rest of the day and night he was fixed to his seat, a wooden bench set close to the wall which served as a support for his back. Whether it was day or night, whether he was alone or amidst a crowd of devotees who came to him daily, it was all the same to the young Sage, who was still in his teens, with a dust-laden, emaciated body, matted hair and long nails. He was fixed to his seat so rigidly and for such a long time day after day for several months in succession, that the wall in Gurumurtham bears even to this day, after the lapse of nearly half a century, the impression of his back!

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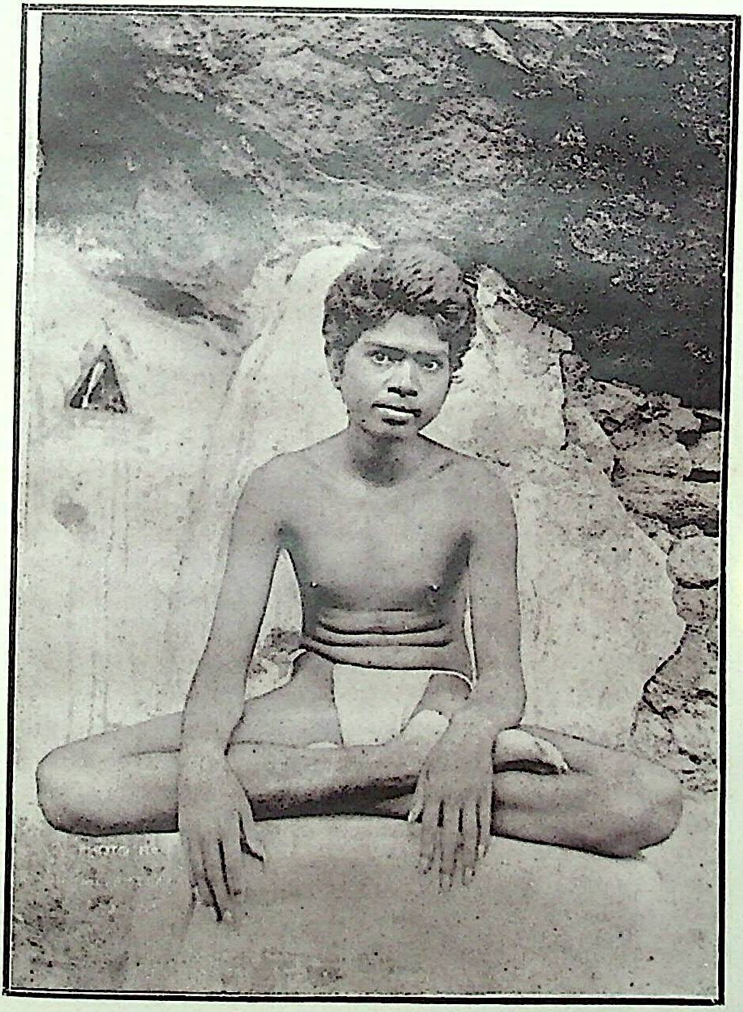
[14] अक्षरत्वाद्वरेण्यत्वाद्धूतसंसारबन्धनात् ।
तत्त्वमस्यादिलक्ष्यत्वादवधूत इतीर्यते ॥

In 1898 Alagammal and others came to know of their Venkataramana and his singular life of austerity at the Hill of the Holy Beacon. In the month of May his uncle came to Tiruvannamalai. He could just recognize his nephew in the strange-looking youth with a cod-piece round the loins of an emaciated body. He could hardly muster courage and press upon the silent youth that he should return home. Taking up this mission the mother herself came to Tiruvannamalai in the month of December. Far from achieving anything of the kind, she could not even make her son utter a word in reply to all her entreaties. At last he wrote on a bit of paper that she must accept destiny taking its course and stop persuading him to do this or that.

THE SAGE OF ARUNAGIRI



At the age of 21 when He wrote the tiny brochure '*Who am I?*'

Later the young Sage moved from place to place around the Hill and finally settled down at the Virupaksha cave. His fame had already spread in the surrounding country, so that wherever he might go round the Hill-side, visitors flocked to him for *Darshan.* Some sought him out for spiritual guidance and instruction, and among the earliest of such disciples were Gambhiram Seshayya and Sivaprakasam Pillai. The oral and written instructions given to the former have come down to us in the form of *Vichara Sangraham* or *Self-Enquiry*; those given to the latter form the brochure "*Who am I*?" In 1904 Kavyakantha Ganapati Sastry, an erudite Sanscrit scholar and poet became his disciple. Several questions were put by Ganapati Sastry and other disciples between 1913 and 1917. These questions as well as the replies given by Maharshi were versified in Sanscrit by Ganapati Sastry under the title *Sri Ramana Gita.*

One of the earliest Western devotees to visit Sri Maharshi was Frank H. Humphreys. During his short stay in India, he sought the Sage's presence thrice, and on the second visit he received spiritual instruction at some length. He set it down in writing and sent it to a friend in London, who published it in *The International Psychic Gazette* in 1911 and, soon after, as a separate booklet, relevant parts of which have been incorporated as Chapters XVII & XVIII in the fourth edition of *Self-Realisation,* to which the reader is referred for a fuller biography of the Sage of Arunagiri.

About the year 1914 Maharshi wrote his first Tamil poem at the request of his devotees. It is a Hymn of ten verses on Lord Arunachala, inculcating supreme faith and devotion. Without such faith and devotion one's search for Knowledge would only be a sort of intellectual diversion. The rest of the four Hymns, one of which is a poem of five slokas in Sanskrit, were composed by the Sage on different occasions later on.

In 1917 came Alagammal; this time she decided to settle down by the side of Maharshi. About the same time he moved to Skandashram which lies a little above the Virupaksha cave and is more spacious than the latter. Food for the Sage as well as his disciples was cooked at Skandashram itself, and the mother who was a Mother for all the disciples took up arduous duties of the Ashram life. During this period, that is between 1917 and 1922 while she lived and toiled along with other devotees, Maharshi taught her to tread the spiritual path by word of mouth, by action, by association and, above all, by his mere Silence which alone can teach the inward way of annihilating the ego. In 1922 she attained *Maha Samadhi* and during her last hours Maharshi sat beside her and, placing his right hand on her heart and his left hand on her head helped her to attain the Supreme State. The Sage also graced with his presence the occasion of the interment of the body of the Mother near *Pali-thirtham* where now the Asramam stands.[15] Some time later in 1922 while Maharshi was on one of his usual visits to the Samadhi, he decided to stay away there and not return to Skandashram. Thus the abode at Skandashram was given up, and around Sage Sri Ramana grew up Sri Ramanasramam, which looks to the needs of the numerous visitors who come throughout the year seeking the benign presence of the Sage. They come, the earnest seekers, from distant countries big and small, from the tiny island of Fiji far way in the Pacific or from the mighty continent of America still farther away.

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[15] Since 1939 a Temple has been under construction over the sacred Shrine. The fore part of the Temple is planned to contain a spacious hall to accommodate the Maharshi and the visitors who seek his Darshan. The Date of *Kumbhabhishekam* of the Temple is 17—3—1949.

Such are some of the leading characteristics and incidents in the life of Bhagavan Sri Ramana Maharshi, who has realized the Truth in his teens, whose life and teachings reveal that Self-Realization is the Miracle of miracles, that it is at once a simple thing and a mighty achievement, indeed the simplest of the simple things a man may do by virtue of the wisdom inherent to his being, as also the mightiest of mighty achievements he may aspire to accomplish through self-denial and self-dedication. Maharshi's life reveals an extraordinary attainment uniting, as in a triple sheaf of corn, a great mind, a strong will and a high character. He scatters "thoughts that breathe and words that burn." His is a life of prestine purity, of which the three essential requisites are thought-control, thought-purification and thought-co-ordination. He has gathered the three beautiful Flowers of the Tree of Knowledge, namely, *Compassion, Devotion* (or rather *Dedication*) and *Renunciation.* Of these *Renunciation* may be said to be the means and *Realization* the end, and the most glorious end too. But really the three qualities are essentially inseparable. "The world" says Herbert Spencer "is governed not by ideas but by feelings, to which ideas serve only as guides." In other words it is not mere acquisition of intellectual knowledge that should be the aim, but the actual realization of the virtues of the heart. Sri Sankaracharya quoting *Tejobindupanishad* enjoins renunciation of worldly forms, which is the key-stone for all the lower types of *sadhana*. When man, not content with the physical appearance of things, probes deep into its nature, and sees introspectively that he is the Spirit concretized, nay petrified, by virtue of his bodily vesture, and withdraws from the things of the world as also from his distracting physical activities in order to realize the Self, then begins for him *Renunciation*, the dawn of real Knowledge.

The Maharshi is no miracle-worker, in the sense in which the term is generally understood. He is not a magician to build up appearances before a bewildered humanity. He does not play a flashlight on the pebbles that lie on the path of the ignorant and deluded man of the world and make them glitter like diamonds. The truth the Sage has realized shines in him like the sun, in the light of which one may see things properly and therby free oneself from worldly entanglements. Miracle-workers are really wanderers from the path of Truth. They delude themselves as well as the innocent public; their minds become entangled in the meshes of psychic powers, which lie as obstacles on the path of Self-Realization. These psychic powers seduce the aspirant, but are mere toys and trifles to the Sage. Patanjali strongly deprecates the pursuit of *siddhis* and warns the seeker not to aspire for them saying "These are obstacles to *Samadhi*, but they are powers in the worldly state." He observes also "The Yogi should not feel allured or flattered by the overtures of Celestial Beings for fear of evil again." *Siddhis* or thaumaturgic powers are a snare to the aspiring soul, but to the Illumined One they are harmless playthings, which, however, he neither seeks to possess nor even to display. Though he has no desires of any kind, it is said, these powers come to him spontaneously. The very desire for *siddhis* implies a want and an implicit subordination of oneself to the powers sought; whereas true Emancipation is the state of perfect Freedom, of complete transcendence of all desires and all limitations. "Emancipation puts us beyond the limitations of life, ethical and spiritual as commonly understood. He that is emancipated is above all sense of personality or agency. He moves but really moves not. He has the vision of completeness, and therein he is fixed. He has no desire, he has no end, either personal or cosmic, in the true sense of the word." There is, therefore, a fundamental difference between the *Jivanmukta*, who may have *siddhis* unsought, and a *Siddha* who seeks and possesses powers but who, for this very reason, is ignorant of the Truth. A *Siddha* is apt to become a despot and "as a despot he is conscious of his powers; a *Jivanmukta* is not. The latter is not a product of long evolution through which he might have acquired powers. Powers he does not seek, powers seek him. And, therefore, no virtue can be attributed to him. He has transcended both activism and quietism. He is free from the impelling of life, individual or cosmic. There is, therefore, a difference between the person moved by a cosmic impelling and a *Jivanmukta* serving a cosmic end. The former is conscious as an agent and the latter is not. The former is conscious of his responsibility and the latter is not; the former may be attuned with the cosmic life, the latter transcends it. Hence, if the latter moves for a cosmic end of humanity, he is not essentially conscious of it. He is conscious of the completeness of the timeless Eternal; and, therefore, what is limited by time and space has no meaning for him. This detachment,—*absolute detachment to both the denials and assertions of life*,— is what makes the *Jivanmukta* different from spiritual personalities who are only conscious of the ends of their powers. The *Jivanmukta* therefore, becomes more and more transcendent, not only in wishes but in adaptation; for, the more complete is the vision of transcendence, the greater is the freedom from psychic powers. Silence is the ideal; and in the complete fruition of individual life, the Adept leaves aside the psychical and physical complex and passes into the Calm ".[16]

All the characteristics of a *Jivanmukta* are clearly discernible in the Maharshi, whose life and teachings vindicate the ancient Truth propounded by the *Upanishads*. But to know this one need not be a *pandit* in Vedanta. Giving her impression, Pascaline Mallet writes in *Turn Eastwards*, [17] " My whole attention was fixed on that central figure, whose calm majesty, serene strength and perfect poise seemed to fill the whole place with unutterable peace. To look into his eyes, shining like stars, was perhaps for the first time to know the meaning of Eternity and to be caught up into a Bliss that passed understanding. Who was this Great One? On what rung of the ladder of human or super-human evolution did he stand? Such questions have but little value. When the sun shines does one need to know why and how it shines? I opened my heart to the Spiritual Life which radiated so intensely in the Silence. I had the impression of being, as it were, surrounded by a sea of fiery Power, welding all present into a great Flame rising Heavenwards. *Not once did the silent figure turn or move or show any sign of interest in the proceedings* (that is, the recitation of the *Vedas* conducted as evening prayers in the Asramam). It was as if he had been living in a sphere beyond the limitations of time and space." On the next morning she saw the other, complementary side of the picture which revealed the perfection in the Sage's Attainment, namely, his realization of that Being which is at once transcendent and immanent. "As we entered, Maharshi was busy writing, and reading letters and newspapers. He seems to take a keen interest in everything that happens in the world, but somehow I had the feeling that all the while he was living in a State where time and space do not exist, neither relative knowledge nor ignorance, above the 'pairs of opposites', in the region of the Absolute, at the very Heart of the Universe. *His utter Impersonality and supreme detachment did not in the very least exclude an all-embracing compassion, sympathy, and understanding of the many problems and difficulties which were continually being submitted to him by all the weary, sorrow-stricken people who come to him in the hope of finding comfort and help.* Rich and poor, men, women and children, Brahmins and outcasts, he looked upon all alike."

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[16] For a detailed study of the State of a *Jivanmukta*, the reader is referred to Dr. B. L. Atreya's exposition based on the *Yoga Vasishtha*. See Appendix.

[17] Published by Messrs. Rider & Co., London.

The tranquillity of Maharshi's intrepid soul and his heroic humility have taught him to look the most terrible realities in their face with a sweet smile of calmness and self-composure. His passion for the 'Divine Gulf' was satisfied, wherein the individual self renounces itself and is entirely absorbed without any thought of return. He professes a faith that has proved true in the experience of many an aspirant who has sought his Presence,—the faith that the Spirit can help others without the aid of bodily activity, and that the most intense action is that of incessant and steadfast abidance in the Self, transcending thought.

The life of Maharshi briefly told is that of one who has attained Liberation or Cosmic Consciousness, and remains in the world after that as a beacon-light to show the path of Liberation to all others and to uplift them to the attainment of this Super-consciousness. Universal Selfhood is what he has realized, and he teaches oneness with everything, the oneness with the Infinite that is the All. He declares the inherent Divinity of man, that everything in life is a manifestation of the Divine and that Self-Realization is the one, supreme Goal. The *Upanishads* are his scriptures and the Advaita Vedanta is his message.[17-A] While the attainment of Brahman is the goal, introspective enquiry is the means. The quintessence of his teachings is contained in the brochure entitled "*Who Am I?*" That is the core of the whole of Advaita philosophy and religion. The Socratic teaching "Man, know thyself!" expresses the initial aspect of Self-enquiry. When the Editor of *The Brahmacharya* called it "Ramana Vidya", it should not be understood

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[17-A] The reader will find a good exposition of the Sage's teachings in *Maha Yoga* by 'Who' published by Sri Ramanasramam.

that Bhagavan Sri Ramana introduced an innovation in the Advaitic realm of thought. But by virtue of his spontaneous Realization, whereby he became the very Embodiment of the Truth at the Hill of the Holy Beacon, he could express, on the basis and ultimate authority of his own experience and in very simple language, the sublime and subtle teachings of Advaita philosophy and religion, and convey to us and to posterity the highest scientific thought of Vedanta in colloquial nursery dialect comprehensible to tyros.

" It seems to one " says a Western admirer [18] " that one must accept the fact that a Sage like the Maharshi comes to reveal something to us, not to argue anything with us. At any rate his teachings make a strong appeal to me ; for his personal attitude and practical method, when understood, are quite scientific in their way. He brings in no supernatural power and demands no blind religious faith. The sublime spirituality of the Maharshi's atmosphere and the rational self-questioning of his philosophy find but a faint echo in yonder temple. Even the word 'God' is rarely on his lips. He avoids the dark and debatable waters of wizardry, in which so many promising voyages have ended in shipwreck. He simply puts forward a way of self-analysis, which can be practised irrespective of any ancient or modern theories and beliefs which one may hold, a way that will finally lead man to true self-understanding.

"He is at once a man of the head and the heart. His genius rises to the sublimest heights of inspiration and he can reach Truth by sheer force and flight of analysis and synthesis, as also the virtues of love, devotion, kindness, gentility, sympathy and the like qualities of the heart which are developed in him in an abundant measure. The result is that his feelings make him one in spirit with the poorest of the poor and his intellect makes him think of the way to redress their drawbacks. The natural dryness which is the general accompaniment of a mighty intellect is cured in him by a warm heart, and naturally therefore the religion of the Maharshi is, to use the expressive words of Macaulay, 'reason fused and made red-hot with passion'. It is a harmonious combination of the head and the heart."

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[18] Dr. Paul Brunton in *A Search in Secret India*. published by Messrs. Rider & Co., London.

Sri Ramana is verily a spiritual power of the first magnitude. He is the Man of Realization. He is the living illustration of the truth declared in the *Gita* that when a man has reached the highest State, the God-state, all his *Karma* ends in Knowledge. Here is One, before our very eyes, who literally breathes Divinity. Looking at his face, into his eyes, we can read worlds of Reality therein. He is himself the Book of Reality.

He is an avalanche of spiritual force. We can see the name of God spelled into the personality of Maharshi with the everlasting letters of actual Realization. Here is the speaking Embodiment of Lord Arunachala. Here is the Presence of Divine Life in the living Realization of the Maharshi himself. With him, all around him and about him is the simplicity of saintly atmosphere. The Personality of Maharshi and the Heart of things are convertible terms. In his sympathy and love for all, he is the embodiment, the incarnation, of human striving and human realization concerning Divine nature. He is a God-man and therefore the Man-God. He is the Seer who speaks with the Object of all-seeing, who enters into the infinite contents of that Object, aye, who literally becomes the Subject of that Object when his *Samadhi* Consciousness rises to its highest level. He is the veritable 'Banyan Tree' under whose spreading branches the weary and heavy-laden in soul find rest and perfect peace. He is the Fountain from which many a soul has drunk deep the Waters of Life.

Ancient Sages like Suka and Vamadeva, and Sri Ramana Maharshi in modern times, were able to control the mind and completely destroy its vagaries. Theirs is the Eternal Life for which there is no death or decay, just as there is no darkness for light. With their introverted concentration they enjoy the perennial Bliss of the Atman. This is what *Kathopanishad* says "Whoever realizes Paramatma in the mind this-wise,[19] becomes free from the agonies of death." Death means the flight of the *Pranas* from the body. For the Realized Souls there is no such flight of the *Pranas*, as is evidenced by the *Brihadaranyaka* text,[20] "The *Pranas* of the *Brahmavit* (the Realized One) do not fly away. They merge in him only."

From the lives of the great Sages it will be seen that they put on the human vesture only to enjoy the Bliss of Self-Realization, not that they have to toil during this mundane existence. Whatever activity they may under-take, they do so not for themselves, but for the good of the world. By their mere presence they deluge the earth with the pure Waters from the perennial Fountain of spiritual Truth.

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[19] दृश्यतेत्वग्रयया बुद्ध्या सूक्ष्मया सूक्ष्मदर्शिभिः ॥

[20] न तस्य प्राणा उत्क्रामन्ति । & अत्रैव समवलीयन्ते ।

Greater things are done by Silence than by tall talk. The Maharshi, who blesses one and all who seek his presence, purges them of their sins. As the fish, tortoise and birds protect their young ones by mere sight, thought and touch respectively, so the Maharshi blesses the 'mild' disciples by sight, the midling by thought, and the advanced by touch.

Maharshi's life is truly representative of the great Hindu ideal of teaching through life and not through words,— of the ideal that Truth bears its fruit in the life of him alone who is ready to receive It and the yoke. Sages like Maharshi are entirely averse to preaching from the pulpit, for they know that it is internal discipline alone that leads to Truth and not hearing sermons poured from the pulpit. Religion for them is no motive to social conduct, but an intense search within for the Realization of Truth in this life. [21]

Maharshi is always in *Sahaja Samadhi*, in the uninterrupted State of Realization and as such is able to attend to multifarious work without feeling disturbed and distracted in any manner whatsoever. It is impossible to gauge the depth of his mind or to describe its state in so many words. He is a Master from whose inexhaustible store of eternal and abiding Truth it is more important to draw what one can for inspiration and without loss of time than to examine the depth and range of his mind. He has the rare gift of gauging in a moment the mental reach of the most self-confident visitor, the power to raise him to the plane suitable to him, and the benevolence to give him the benefit of his guidance and inspiration. The most remarkable thing about Maharshi is that he seems to give something of himself while speaking from his Super-experience. It is in view of this inestimable blessing conferred by the Sage on the earnest seeker, that Mr. Grant Duff wrote "The Sage is still living, alert, easy of access and willing to confer the ineffable boon of his presence and of answering any questions put to him by the seeker. What more can be required? Very many thousands of his own countrymen have already sought Arunachala and a few Europeans have also been initiated. Should these who have in their power to visit the Asramam delay, they will have only themselves to blame in future lives". Many an astute thinker had his insoluble problems solved in the presence of Maharshi. The most abstruse points of Advaita are retrieved from the domain of barren speculation by a vital something which seems to emanate from his person. His teachings are as instructive and inspiring as they are dynamic and constructive.

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[21] On this very point, years after I had written the above lines, Mr. Duncan Greenlees put some questions to the Sage. My views as stated above are fully borne out by the answers given by him to the Englishman. The reader is referred to Chapter II in *Maharshi's Gospel, Book I.*

To give form and content to the abstract notions of the Truth and to present that Truth in a manner that It comes within the reach of the most ordinary intellect is the mission of Maharshi. To the erudite scholar of a university or to a man in the street, he expounds the

Truth with equal felicity; for the store-house of knowledge for him is his own Experience. And, above all, his spiritual Presence radiates ineffable peace and happiness towards all around him, nay, even to those far away, if even once they have heard of him, the Sage of Arunagiri![22]

If *really* you want to see God in flesh and blood, go to Bhagavan Sri Ramana, have his Darshan and be blessed.

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[22] I cannot do better than to supplement this small sketch with the concise and scholarly exposition of the supreme, spiritual significance of the Maharshi's Presence, of his life and teachings, from the pen of a Prince of the Cochin State, late Rama Varma.

SUPPLEMENT

SRI RAMANA MAHARSHI

BY

Rama Varma Appan Thampuran

There is no limit to the surging rise or to the subsiding tranquillity of the mind. Nor is there any limit to its powers to chastise or control and to confer a blessing. It is indeed the cause of both happiness and misery, of enjoyment and of Liberation. If we can only understand the original and changing states of the mind, we shall be able to know the real nature of the illusory dream of the so-called waking state which deludes us. If it is recognized that *Samsara* is nothing but a work of the mind, then the mystery of the cycle of births and deaths of the soul will be revealed.

> **"मन एव मनुष्याणां कारणं बन्धमोक्षयोः ।"**
>
> "Mind alone is the (root-) cause of man's bondage and Liberation."

> **"या निशा सर्वभूतानां तस्यां जागर्ति संयमी"** [भ. गी.]
>
> "He who has subdued his mind is awake in that which is night to all beings."

It is this essential nature of the mind that has been conclusively established by hundreds of such authoritative texts, the truth whereof can be grasped only by experience.

There is no one who does not desire to eradicate misery and attain happiness, nor is there any who does not strive to this end. Nor are the metaphysicians, who investigate into the active and passive states of the mind, so scarce. But they are rare indeed who know that the search for the truth about the mind has to be made within oneself and not in others, and that happiness and misery are of one's own making. Few are those who enquire after the truth about the Self; fewer still are the Self-realized,

"यततामपि सिद्धानां कश्चिन्मां वेत्ति तत्त्वतः" [भ. गी.]

"Hardly one among the *Siddhas* who strive, ever understands Me aright."

Thus said Lord Krishna; it cannot be otherwise.

The path to Self-realization is not easily accessible, and it is extremely difficult to tread. And except that path there is no other access to the Mansion of Eternal Bliss. Mind-control is the indispensable discipline for those who seek to obtain the knowledge of the Self. It is for this reason that *yama* is reckoned as the first step in the eightfold *yoga*. Without attaining perfection in *yoga*, thaumaturgic powers cannot be achieved. It is quite possible that even the *siddhas*, who had achieved such powers, might not have realized the Truth. So then, whom would it not benefit to laud the Saint who has realized It?

Such Self-realization dawned all at once for the Maharshi. The Light of the Self shone forth suddenly like the flash of lightning. When it was time for *karma* to fulfil itself, the meritorious past made the ripe fruit of enquiry into the Truth,—which was latent in him—easily fit for enjoyment. The casual hearing of the holy name of Sri Arunachaleswara and the subsequent conscious experience of the state of death were merely the immediate and efficient cause—purely incidental,—a slender contrivance to release the Flood of Inner Light. It was the flow of Pure Consciousness of the Self into the *jiva-nadi* (life-duct) ensheathed in the inert physical body, like the transmission of the subtle current from the wire into the filament in the electric bulb ; it was the separation of the Embodied One from the body.

For him there was no need of any disciplines, nor had he the pain and anguish of the journey to reach the axle-centre of Pure Being from the rim of the wheel of *samsara.* The Supreme Lord of the Universe lifted him up with His sacred hand and established him at the very Centre and Source of *Sat-Chit-Ananda.* Then, as he opened his eyes, the world was seen resplendent with Light. 'Life in solitude, non-attachment to society, abidance in the Self, direct perception of the Truth' and such other signs of Enlightenment became handmaids to the pure Soul who in a trice attained eternal Liberation.

Though the seed of the meritorious past sprouted in the place of his birth, it grew and bore fruit at the sacred place of Arunachala. What more disciplines are needed than the presence of a perfect seed, the sacred soil of Arunachala, the showering nectar of the Lord's Grace and the sustaining power of austerity to make the Imperishable Tree of Spirit firm rooted and to enrich it with an abundance of divine fruits? Let the tempest rage, the ocean rise up, or the earth quake, the Tree of Knowledge rooted on the summit of Sri Arunachala stands immutable. Many pilgrims on life's journey repose in Its shade, and countless devotees like birds pour forth their songs from Its branches. This is indeed the Kingdom of Bliss or *Vaikuntha*.

The aim is one, but many are the angles of vision; the goal is one, but many are the steps leading thereto. The eyes that may mark the aim have no sight, and the ways are dark: the paths trodden by great men are not easily known, and they are diverse. It is arduous and difficult to regulate one's life (conscientiously) after examining and finding out what is happiness and what is misery, what is *dharma* (duty) and what is *adharma* (dereliction of duty), what is *karma* (work) and what is *akarma* (not-work). It is next to impossible for ordinary men to proceed one step without getting entangled in the meshes of illusion. The physical body is heir to disease; fickle is the mind, and narrow the intellect.

"यत्तदग्रे विषमिव परिणामेऽमृतोपमम्" [भ. गीता]

"That which in the beginning seems like poison, is in the end like nectar," is not said in vain. No need to wonder that the One Real is seen as many and in diverse ways. It is understood by those who have experienced this felicity (of a life of ease) and that agony (of a life of discipline). It is known only to those who have the experience. In this respect the life of the Maharshi is unique. Lord Arunachala blessed the meritorious Soul with His glance so full of Mercy, lifted him up with His holy hand, and made him share half His seat in the

Kingdom of Heaven. Only then did Maharshi open his eyes towards the light outside. He had only to look below with commiseration, had never to look above and toil.

It is, perhaps, for this reason we find in the teachings of Maharshi that the Fruit of Knowledge is vindicated for the most part rather than the paths towards It signalized, giving pre-eminence to the end rather than to the means. It is also doubtful if he considers the eight-fold *yoga* to be a temporal discipline pertaining merely to the attainment of thaumaturgic powers. Surely he regards it as a spiritual method intended for the realization of the Supreme State. This is indeed the highest end and aim of *yoga*. Otherwise it would not be the path of quietude and emancipation but one of activity and attachment. Desire and dispassion are indeed poles apart, and how can Liberation come from bondage? *They* are fit to receive his instruction who, with faith and devotion, earnestly seek Truth and ardently aspire for Liberation. Save through one's own experience, Self-Knowledge is not to be achieved and realized,—never through scholarship. That the expositions of the subtle Truth by the Masters who have realized the Self are clearer and more easily grasped than the dialectics of scholars, is due to the fact that the former is the Radiance of Pure Consciousness caught on a crystal-clear mind and the latter is but a dance of ignorance (*avidya*) aided by intellectual brilliance. In the case of Maharshi, on attaining perfect Self-realization and with the loss of the ego, scholarship evolved spontaneously as a component part of Wisdom. Can there be anything undisclosed, any hidden principle to those who, on the dawn of Knowledge, see the entire universe as clearly as a crystal held in the palm and discern the One in many and many in the One? For those who see at a glance the entire Essence of everything, can there be paucity of illustrations that appeal direct to the heart? What are scholars and poets before the Self-Realised One and the seraphic poet?

The sorrows of the distressed who surrender themselves to him, the doubts of the earnest seekers, the disbelief of the sceptics who come to test him, and even the pride of the high and mighty, verily perish in the mere Presence of Maharshi. His sacred abode confers Peace and even induces that spiritual trance which yields the Bliss of Self-Realization.

चित्रं वटतरोर्मूले वृद्धाश्शिष्या गुरुर्युवा ।
गुरोस्तु मौनं व्याख्यानं शिष्यास्तुँ छिन्नसंशयाः ॥

" Behold, the marvel at the foot of the Banyan tree! Aged are the disciples, and young the Guru. The Guru's exposition is SILENCE, but the disciples are freed from all doubts!"

That Divine Power of Dakshinamurthy, the Embodiment of Knowledge, working through the inner being of Maharshi is within the ken and experience of such insignificant devotees as myself. Who, then, would not long to taste the nectar of the story of such a Hallowed One?

" निवृत्ततर्षैरुपगीयमानात् भवौषधाच्छ्रोत्रमनोभिरामात्
क उत्तमश्लोकगुणानुवादात् पुमान् विरज्येत विनाऽपशुघ्नात् ।"
[भागवतम्]

" Who but the cruel-hearted would desist from singing the praise of Hallowed Souls, which is chanted by people past desire, which is the remedy for the 'disease of birth' and which is pleasing to the ear and the mind alike."

The praise of Maharshi like that of Yogeswara Sri Krishna is relishable and beneficial alike to the sensuous who are sunk in the whirlpool of egoistic attachment and wallow in the ditch of blind infatuation, as well as to those who seek Liberation and to the Liberated. It is indeed our good fortune to live in the life-time of such a distinguished great Sage and to reside in the same country. Blessed are the devotees who spend their time in his Presence.

If in this consecrated offering made for self-purification by the humblest of his devotees, should there be defects of form or want of taste,

हरिरिति तण्डुलराशौ, किञ्चिल्लिखितुमविवेकबालानाम् ।
सर्वान्कृतापराधान्, कारुण्येन क्षमस्व जगदीश ॥

O Supreme Lord of the Universe!
Bear with the errors of Thy children,
Who cannot even scrawl the letters of Thy name, Hari,
On the customary layers of rice.

The Life of Maharshi, who has attained Liberation, is not the biography of an individual but the Radiance of the Universal Self, not the expression of body's acts but the Manifestation of the Spirit within.

(*Translated from "Prabuddha Bharatam*")

THE TEACHINGS OF SRI RAMANA

I

God Guru & Grace

1. The Guru is God Himself.

God and the *Guru* (Master) are really one and identical. He that has earned the Grace of the *Guru* shall undoubtedly be saved and never forsaken, just as the prey that has fallen into the jaws of a tiger will never be allowed to escape. Nevertheless, the disciple, for his part, must unswervingly follow the path shown by the Master. (*Who am I?*)

2. The Guru is the Self of the self of all.

The Guru is one who at all times abides in the profound depths of the Self. He never sees any difference between himself and others, and he is not in the least obsessed by false notions of distinction that he himself is the Enlightened One, while those around him are immersed in cimmerian darkness of ignorance. His firmness or self-possession can never be shaken under any circumstances; he is never perturbed. (*Spiritual Instruction*)

The idea that a Master is simply one who has attained power over various occult senses or faculties by long practice and prayer or anything of the kind, is absolutely false. No Master ever cared a rap for occult powers, for he has no need for them in his daily life.

(*Instruction to Mr. Humphreys*)

The Master fixes his attention so firmly on 'That Which Sees' that, even though his eyes and ears be open, he neither sees nor hears nor has any physical consciousness at all, nor mental either, while he is in meditation. He has only the Spiritual Consciousness, and is merged in that Light of Pure Being. (*Ibid*)

And he cannot help being perpetually in this state with only this difference, that in some, to us, incomprehensible way, he can use the mind, body and intellect too, without falling back into the delusion of having separate consciousness. (*Ibid*)

A Master when instructing is far from any thought of instructing; but to feel a doubt or a difficulty in his presence is to call forth at once, before you can express the doubt, his marvellous words which will clear away that doubt. His words never fail, and he makes no claim to have either originated the thoughts or to have been the means of destroying a doubt. He feels no surprise at your question, feels no exultation in himself for having allayed your doubt. (*Ibid*)

A Master sacrifices his whole self, lets it down as an artificial idea into the Ocean of GOD, Who is literally the Substance and the Cause of everything. He becomes GOD, becomes the Embodiment of Happiness which is GOD. No one can come near him without being blessed. (*Ibid*)

Scriptures state explicitly that through his Grace the Master helps and enables the disciple to lose himself utterly in and become like or identical with the Master. The Master should, therefore, be recognised as none other than the Supreme Being. (*Spiritual Instruction*)

3. In the presence of the Guru the disciple attains the Primal State.

It is true, indeed, that in the spiritual sense the Being of the Master is identical with that of the disciple. It is, however, very seldom that a person can realize his true Being without the Grace of the Master. Mere book-learning, however profound and extensive, or doing rare, meritorious and apparently impossible deeds, does not enable one to obtain true Enlightenment. Ask such a scholar or hero "Do you know *yourself*?" He will be constrained to admit his ignorance. Therefore, except at the Feet of the Master and in his divine Presence, it is quite impossible for the seeker to reach and abide in that primal state of pure Being or the Self, where the mind is entirely subdued and all its activity has completely ceased. Hence it is said that the Master's Grace is essential for the spiritual Awakening of the disciple.

(*Spiritual Instruction*)

If one would but seek God or the *Guru*, one will find that all the while they have been seeking the seeker with a solicitude greater than what one can ever imagine.

(*Maharshi's Gospel, Bk. I*)

4. The Guru guides the disciple both from 'within' and 'without.'

Sometime in his life a man becomes dissatisfied with it; and, not content with what he has, he seeks the satisfaction of desires, through prayer to God etc. His mind is gradually purified, until he longs to know God, more to obtain His Grace than to satisfy his worldly desires. Then God's Grace begins to manifest. God takes the form of a *Guru* and appears to the devotee, teaches him

Truth and also purifies his mind by association etc. The devotee's mind gains strength and is then able to turn inward. By meditation it is further purified, and finally in the presence of the Master it becomes still, without the least ripple. That calm Expanse is the Self.

(*Maharshi's Gospel, Bk. I*)

The *Guru* is both 'external' and 'internal'. From the 'exterior' he gives a push to the mind to turn inward; from the 'interior' he pulls the mind towards the Self, and helps in the quieting of the mind. That is *Guru-kripa*. There is no difference between God, *Guru* and the Self. (*Ibid*)

The Master is within; meditation is meant to remove the ignorant idea that he is only outside. But as long as man thinks he is the body, so long is the Master 'without' also necessary, and he will appear as if with a body. When the wrong identification of oneself with the body ceases, the Master will be found as none other than the Self. (*Ibid*)

5. Unto Him the ego must surrender itself.

Man thinks that the world can be conquered by his own effort. When he is frustrated externally and is driven inwards, he feels " Oh! there is a Power higher than man." (*Maharshi's Gospel, Bk. I*)

The ego is like a very powerful elephant, which cannot be brought under control by any less powerful than a lion, which, in this instance, is no other than the *Guru*, whose very look makes the elephant-like ego tremble and die. (*Ibid*)

One of two things must be done: either surrender yourself, because you realize your inability and need a Higher Power to help you; or investigate into the cause of misery, go into the Source and so merge in the Self. Either way you will be free from misery. God or *Guru* never forsakes the devotee who has surrendered himself.

(*Ibid*).

Conclusion

> Know that your glory lies where you cease to exist. In order to gain that State, you should surrender yourself. Then, the Master sees that you are in a fit state to receive guidance and he guides you.

(*Maharshi's Gospel, Book I*)

II

THE HEART

त्वय्यरुणाचल सर्वं, भूत्वा स्थित्वा प्रलीनमेतच्चित्रम् ।
हृद्यहमित्यात्मतया, नृत्यसि भोस्ते वदन्ति हृदयं नाम ॥

O Arunachala! in Thee the picture of the universe is formed, and has its stay and is dissolved; in this enigma lies the miracle of Truth. Thou art the Self, Who dancest in the Heart as 'I-I'. HEART is Thy name, O Lord! (*Five Hymns to Sri Arunachala*)

1. Heart is the Self Supreme.

That everyone points to the chest when referring to himself by gesture is sufficient proof that the Absolute resides as the Self in the Heart. Sage Vasishtha also says that searching for the Self as being external to oneself, oblivious of its constant shining as 'I-I' within the Heart, is similar to throwing away an invaluable, celestial gem and coveting a sparkling pebble. (*Self-Enquiry*)

The Sanscrit term for 'Heart' is '*Hridayam*'. The word *Hridayam* consists of two syllables, *Hrit* and *Ayam*, which signify "I am the Heart." Heart is the very Core of your being; It is that with which you are really identical whether you are awake, asleep or dreaming, whether you are engaged in work or immersed in *Samadhi*. (*Maharshi's Gospel, Bk. II*)

2. Heart comprises all, yet It has to be sought within.

From the absolute stand-point the Heart, Self or Consciousness, can have no particular place assigned to it. Because pure Consciousness is indivisible; it is without parts. It has no form and shape, no 'within' and 'without'. There is no 'right' or 'left' for it. Pure Consciousness, which is the Heart, includes all; and nothing is outside or apart from it. That is the ultimate Truth. (*Maharshi's Gospel, Bk. II*)

When the mind in the form of the ego, which takes the body for the Self and strays out, is curbed within the Heart, the sense of 'I' in the body relinquished, and enquiry made with a still mind in tune with the Self as to who it is that dwells in the body, a subtle Illumination will be experienced as "I-I" which is no other than the Absolute, the Self, seated in the lotus of the Heart, in the city of the body, the tabernacle of God. Then one should remain still, with the conviction that the Self shines as everything yet nothing, within, without and everywhere, and as also the transcendental Being. By long, continuous and steady practice of this meditation on the Self as "*The Supreme I am*", the evil of ignorance will be removed, and Wisdom in perfection will result. Knowing in this manner the Real indwelling in the cavity of the Heart, in the tabernacle of the body, is indeed realizing the Absolute, which is inherent in all; because the Heart, comprises all that exists.

(*Self-Enquiry*)

Only for the purpose of pointing out that the whole objective world is within and not without, have the scriptures described the cosmos as being shaped like the lotus of the Heart. But that is no other than the Self. (*Ibid*)

3. The Heart is pure Consciousness which gives Its Light to the mind which then sees the world.

Only when the mind is externalized does the world of gross name and form appear. When the mind abides in the Heart, the world disappears. (*Sri Ramana Gita*)

The world is not other than the mind; the mind is not other than the Heart; that is the whole truth. The Heart is to the body as the sun is to the universe; the mind in the brain shines by the Light it receives from the Heart. The Enlightened One, ever inhering in the Heart, notices the light of the mind lost in the Light of the Heart, just as the light of the moon is lost in the daylight. The Wise understand that *Prajnana* (Consciousness) means really the Heart, and only apparently the mind. God is not other than the Heart. (*Ibid*)

4. The spiritual Heart-centre in the body is towards the right in the chest.

Pure Consciousness wholly unrelated to the physical body and transcending the mind is a matter of direct experience. Sages know their bodiless, eternal Existence just as the layman knows his bodily existence. But the experience of Consciousness can be with bodily awareness as well as without it. In the bodiless experience of pure Consciousness, the Sage is beyond time and space. Since during this bodiless experience of the Heart as pure Consciousness the Sage is not at all aware of the body, that absolute Experience is localized by him within the limits of the physical body by a sort of feeling recollection made while he is with bodily awareness. (*Maharshi's Gospel, Bk. II*)

Thus localized, the Heart-centre is in the chest, two digits to the right from the median, and it is quite different from the blood-propelling, muscular organ known by the same name. (*Ibid*)

Sages having investigated all the different versions of the innumerable scriptures have rightly and briefly stated the whole truth in the following manner, that it is the experience of every-one that the Heart is primarily the seat of the 'I'. (*Self-Enquiry*)

The very same Self shines unaffected in the Heart of all. It is the Light unlimited and infinite like space. It is selfluminous as pure Consciousness, as the One without a second; and manifesting universally as the same in all individuals; it is known as the Supreme Being or Brahman. 'Heart' is merely another name for the Supreme Lord, because He is in all Hearts. (*Ibid*)

Conclusion

हृदयकुहरमध्ये केवलं ब्रह्ममात्रं
ह्यहमहमिति साक्षादात्मरूपेण भाति ।
हृदि विश मनसा स्वं चिन्वता मज्जता वा
पवनचलनरोधादात्मनिष्ठो भव त्वम् ॥

In the interior of the cavity of the Heart the One Supreme Being alone shines as the 'I-I', verily the Atman. Entering into the Heart with one-pointed mind either through Self-enquiry or by diving within or by breath control, abide thou in *Atmanishtha.*

(*Sri Ramana Gita*)

III

SELF-ENQUIRY

1. Self-enquiry is the only direct means to realize the Truth transcending mind and thought.

Self-enquiry is the one infallible means, the only direct one, to realize the unconditioned, absolute Being. It alone can reveal the truth that neither the mind nor the world really exists, and enables one to realize the pure, undifferentiated Being or the Self Absolute.

(*Maharshi's Gospel, Bk. II*)

The Self is pure Consciousness, whence arises the I-thought and the mind; and unless the mind subsides, the Self is not realised. (*Ibid*)

For the subsidence of the mind there is no other means more effective and adequate than the enquiry in quest of the Self. Even though by other means the mind subsides, that is only apparently so; it will rise again. (*Ibid*)

Every kind of *sadhana* except that of *Atma-vichara* presupposes the retention of the mind as the instrument for carrying on the *sadhana*, and without the mind it cannot be practised. The ego may take different and subtler forms at different stages of one's practice, but is itself never destroyed. The attempt to destroy the ego or the mind through *sadhanas* other than *Atma vichara*, is just like the thief turning out a policeman to catch the thief, that is, himself. (*Ibid*)

2. The world is an illusion formed on the Self. This illusion must go before the Self is realized.

That which arises in this physical body as 'I' is the mind. If the mind, which is the instrument of knowledge and is the basis of all activity subsides, the perception of the world as an objective reality ceases. (*Who am I?*)

Unless you give up the idea that the world is real, your mind will always be after it. If you take the appearance to be real, you will never know the Real itself, although it is the Real alone that exists. This point is illustrated by the analogy of 'the snake in the rope'. As long as you see the snake, you cannot see the rope as such. The non-existent snake becomes real to you, while the real rope wholly non-existent as such. Similarly, unless the illusory perception of the world as an objective reality ceases, the Vision of the true nature of the Self, on which the illusion is formed, is not obtained.

(*Maharshi's Gospel, Bk. II*)

3. The Self is the one, eternal Truth; the ego is but a spurious manifestation.

Since every other thought can occur only after the rise of the I-thought and since the mind is nothing but a bundle of thoughts, it is only through the enquiry 'Who am I?' that the mind subsides. (*Who am I?*)

WHO AM I? WHENCE AM I?

It is not the physical body that proclaims itself as 'I', and no one says that in deep sleep, when the 'body-am-I' idea ceases, one ceases to be. When the one thing 'I' appears, all else appears. With one-pointed mind seek whence this 'I' arises. (*Sat Darshan & Truth Revealed*)

In between the two, namely, the Self of Pure Consciousness and the inert, physical body, there arises most mysteriously the ego-sense or I-notion. It is a hybrid, which is neither the Self nor the physical body, and flourishes as *jiva* or individual being. This is the ego, and it identifies itself with some gross object simultaneously with its rise. It cannot remain without such association. (*Sat Darshan & Truth Revealed*)

This association is due to *ajnana* or nescience, whose destruction is the objective of one's efforts. If this tendency of the ego to identify itself with the objects is destroyed, it (the ego) becomes pure; and then, it also merges into its Source. The false identification of oneself with the body is known as *dehatma-buddhi* or 'I-am-the-body' idea. It must go before good results can follow. This idea, however, is a false super-imposition, because one exists in deep sleep without being associated with the body and the mind. This separation is possible because *you* are not identical with *your* body and mind. You can separate yourself from what is external to you, but not from That (the real I) which is one with you. Hence the real I or the Self cannot be the body or the mind. This must be realized in the waking state.

(*Maharshi's Gospel, Bk. I*)

Therefore, lay aside the inert, corpse-like body, as though it were truly a corpse. Do not even murmur 'I', but enquire keenly within as to what it is that now shines within the Heart as 'I'. Transcending the intermittent flow of diverse thoughts there arises the continuous, unbroken awareness, silent and spontaneous, as 'I-I' in the Heart. If one catches it and remains still, It will completely annihilate the sense of 'I' in the body. Sages and scriptures proclaim this to be Liberation.

(*Self-Enquiry*)

4. Crucifixion of the ego is the purport of the scriptures of all religions. Mere study of the scriptures is futile.

The body is the cross. Jesus, the son of man, is the ego or 'I-am-the-body' idea. When the son of man is crucified on the cross, the ego perishes, and what survives is the Absolute Being. It is the Resurrection of the Glorious Self,—of Christ, the Son of God.

(*Maharshi's Gospel, Bk. I*)

All scriptures, without any exception, proclaim that for attaining Salvation the mind or ego must be destroyed. What is required to bring about such destruction is actual enquiry regarding oneself by self-interrogation, 'Who Am I?' How can this enquiry in quest of the Self be made merely by means of a study of the scriptures?

(*Who am I?*)

Doubts and misconceptions are dispelled by Realization only, never by the study of numerous scriptures. Unless the seeker be fixed in the Self, free from the outgoing tendencies of the mind, the Self can never be realized,—certainly not by seeking knowledge though from hundreds of books. Spontaneous inherence in the Self is indeed Liberation; that is the State Supreme, the State of Realization. (*Spiritual Instruction*)

5. To be ever aware of the Self is the acme of spiritual Sadhana: and Self-realization is God-realization.

The Self is self-effulgent. One need give it no mental picture, anyway. The thought that imagines is itself bondage, because the Self is the Effulgence transcending darkness and light. One should not think of it with the mind; such imagination will end in bondage, whereas the Self is spontaneously shining as the Absolute. This enquiry into the Self in the form of devotional meditation, evolves into the state of absorption of the mind into the Self and leads to unqualified Bliss.

(*Self-Enquiry*)

One should by all possible means try ever to be aware of the Self. Everything is achieved if one succeeds in this. Let not the mind be diverted to any other object. One should abide in the Self without the sense of doership even when engaged in work born of destiny.

(*Ibid*)

Firm and disciplined inherence in the Atman (that is abiding in *Atmanishtha*), without giving the least scope for the rise of any thought except the deep contemplative remembrance (*Smriti*) of the Self, does verily constitute self-surrender to the Supreme Lord. (*Who Am I?*) If one continually contemplates on the Self, which is Itself God, this single thought will in due course replace all distraction, and itself ultimately vanish; the pure Consciousness that alone finally remains is the Realization of God. This is Liberation. Never to be heedless of one's own all-perfect, pure Self is the acme of *yoga*, Wisdom and all other forms of spiritual practice.

(*Self-Enquiry*)

The Self is God. I AM is God.

(*Maharshi's Gospel, Bk. I*)

To see God,—leaving aside oneself, the Seer,—is but seeing a purely mental image. Only he who sees the Self, first having lost the ego self, is said to have seen God, because God is none other than the Self.

(*Sat Darshan & Truth Revealed*)

To see oneself free from limitations is to see the Lord as verily the Self. (*Upadesa Saram*)

The One Self, the Sole Reality, alone exists eternally. When even the Ancient Teacher, Dakshinamurthi, revealed It in Silence, who else could have conveyed it by speech?

(*Ekatma Panchakam*)

6. Self-realization is Supreme Beatitude.

That which is Bliss is verily the Self. Bliss and the Self are not distinct and separate, but are one and identical: and that alone is the Real. (*Sri Ramana Gita*)

This phenomenal world is nothing but thought. When the world recedes from one's view,—that is, when the mind is free from thought,—it (the mind) enjoys the Bliss of the Self. Conversely, when the world appears,—that is, when thought occurs,—the mind experiences pain and anguish. (*Who am I?*)

The enquiry 'Who am I?' is the only method of putting an end to all misery and ushering in Supreme Beatitude. Whatever and however it may be said, that is the whole truth in a nutshell. (*Self-Enquiry*)

7. The Self is not only the easiest thing to know, but beyond It there is nothing else to know.

All that is required to realise the Self is to BE STILL. And what can be easier than that? Hence, *Atma-vidya* is the easiest to attain.

(*Maharshi's Gospel, Bk. I*)

But people do not understand this simple, bare truth of their everyday, ever-present, eternal experience. This truth is that of the Self. Is there anyone unaware of the Self? But people do not like even to hear of this Truth, whereas they are eager to know what lies beyond, about heaven, hell and reincarnation. (*Ibid*)

Because they love mystery and not the Truth religions cater to them, so as eventually to bring them round to the Self. Whatever be the means adopted, you must at last return to the Self: so, why not abide in the Self here and now? (*Ibid*)

He who is forgetful of the Self, mistaking the physical body for It, and goes through innumerable births, is just like one who wanders all over the world in a dream. Realising the Self thereafter would only be like the waking up from one's dream-wanderings.

(*Ekatma Panchakam*)

Knowledge of the Self, which knows all, is Knowledge in perfection. (*Ibid*)

Conclusion

देहं मृण्मयवज्जडात्मकमहं बुद्धिर्नतस्यास्त्यतो
नाहं तत्तदपेतसुप्तिसमये सिद्धात्मसद्भावतः ।
कोहं भावयुतः कुतोवरधिया दृष्ट्वात्मनिष्ठात्मनां
सोऽहं स्फूर्तितयाऽरुणाचलशिवः पूर्णोविभाति स्वयम् ॥

The body is insentient like an earthen pot, and to it there is not the I-sense. And even in deep sleep, when there is no body (that is, when unaware of the body), we do exist as the self-established Atman. Therefore, the 'I' is not the body. Enquire, then, 'Who am I?, Whence am I?' In the Heart of those, who, seeking thus with keen insight, stay in *Atmanishtha* (that is, remain in the State of steadfast and tranquil abidance in the Self), there shines forth Lord Arunachala Siva as 'I-am-That'- Consciousness, which is self-luminous and perfect.

(*Truth Revealed*)

IV

KNOWLEDGE AND DEVOTION

1. Jnana and Bhakti are one.

Self is the dearest of all: there is nothing dearer than the Self. Love unbroken like a stream of oil is Devotion. The man of Wisdom realizes through Love that the Lord is none other than the Self. The devotee, though considering Him to be apart, still merges in the Self. One whose Love of the Lord is continuous and unbroken like a stream of oil, is sure to be merged in the Self, though not desired by him. (*Sri Ramana Gita*)

The eternal, unbroken, natural State of abiding in the Self is *Jnana*. To abide in the Self one must love the Self. Since God is verily the Self, Love of the Self is Love of God; and that is *Bhakti*. *Jnana* and *Bhakti* are thus one and the same. (*Maharshi's Gospel, Bk. I*)

2. A life of Devotion is a life without the 'I' and 'mine.'

Devotion consists in leading a life of absolute purity in thought, word and deed,—considering oneself as merely a servant of the Lord and acting always with that faith and devotion which has no desire to enjoy the fruits of one's labours. Such a devotee finally comes to realize—(not as a matter of intellectual ratiocination, but by direct and indubitable experience and by submergence in the Divine)—the truth that all his acts are really the acts of the Supreme Ordainer. He does not feel as having an individual will of his own, or as having any initiative in the acts he does or even an independent being separate from that of the Lord. He is entirely free from the sense of 'I' (*ahamkara*) and 'mine' (*mamakara*), — no matter what his body may appear to do or what he may appear to possess. Thus he shines in the resplendent glory of selfless existence.

(*Spiritual Instruction*)

3. Liberation is the one Goal to which all paths lead.

Liberation consists in the utter annihilation of the ego or *ahamkara* and the entire destruction of 'my' and 'mine' or *mamakara*, by any possible means. Further, as these are found to flourish together, being entirely interdependent, the destruction of either *ahamkara* or *mamakara* causes also the destruction of the other. In order to attain that state of supreme Quiescence or *Mouna* transcending speech and thought, either the path of Knowledge or *Vedanta Marga*, which leads to the annihilation of the ego, or the path of Devotion or *Bhakti Marga* which results in the destruction of 'my' and 'mine', is equally effective. Therefore, there can be no doubt that the Goal according to either path is one and the same.

(*Ibid*)

4. The Self or God is all.

To see God in all you must think of God. Keeping God in your mind becomes *dhyana*, and *dhyana* is a stage before Realization. Realization can only be in and of the Self. It can never be apart from the Self; and *dhyana* must precede it. Whether you practise *dhyana* on God or on the Self, it is immaterial; for the result is the same. You cannot, by any means, escape the Self. It is impossible for you to see God in all without seeing Him in yourself. If *all* is God; are you not included in that *all*? Being God yourself, is it a wonder that *all* is God? This is the method advised in *Srimad-Bhagavata*, and elsewhere by others. (*Maharshi's Gospel, Bk. I*)

5. Self-Knowledge or self-surrender, either imply the annihilation of the ego.

Either seek the Source of the ego, so that it may vanish, or surrender yourself so that it may be struck down. Self-surrender is the same as Self-Knowledge, and either of them necessarily implies self-control. The ego submits only when it recognizes the Higher Power. (*Ibid*)

Surrender can take effect only when it is done with full knowledge as to what real surrender means. Such knowledge comes after enquiry and reflection, and ends invariably in self-surrender. There is no difference between *Jnana* and absolute surrender to the Lord, that is, in thought, word and deed. To be complete surrender must be unquestioning; the devotee cannot bargain with the Lord, or demand favours at His hands. Such entire surrender comprises all: it is *Jnana* and *Vairagya*, Devotion and Love. (*Ibid*)

Conclusion

हृत्स्थले मनः स्वस्थताक्रिया ।
भक्तियोगबोधाश्च निश्चितम् ॥

Subsidance of the mind in the Heart, the Source, is verily the significance of *Karma*, *Bhakti*, *Yoga* and *Jnana*. (*Upadesa Saram*)

V

WORK AND WISDOM

1. Selfless service and solitary communion are the two kinds of austerity prescribed for the earnest aspirant.

There are two kinds of self-discipline appropriate to mature aspirants. The first is giving up worldly activity for the sake of solitary communion. The second is rendering selfless service for the benefit of others.

(*Sri Ramana Gita*)

Among the former kind of aspirants, he who realizes *Sahajatmanishtha* abides by virtue of his innate disposition in incessant *tapas*, which is very difficult to attain. (*Ibid*)

Concerning the other aspirants, it is stated that their acts of devotion and service to society greatly purify their mind, *provided* they have taken up Self-enquiry and have developed dispassion (*vairagya*). (*Ibid*)

2. Atma-vichara is indispensable for every aspirant, to whichever Asrama he may belong.

The adoption of *Sannyasa Asrama* is not indispensable for realizing *Atmanishtha*. What is required is the sustained effort to get rid of one's attachments to the body. This is the only means for realizing the state of firm and tranquil abidance in the Self. Through *Atma-vichara* one attains *Atmanishtha*.

(*Spiritual Instruction*)

Anyone may take up *Atma-vichara*, a *Brahmachari*, *Grihastha*, *Vanaprastha* or *Sannyasi*, a *Sudra* or a woman or any other person fit for it. *Brahmacharya* is really enquiry into the nature of Brahman, that is, the *Atman* or Self. The strength gained in *Brahmacharya* by means of discipline, study and wisdom manifests later on in splendour. (*Ibid*)

Without ripeness and purity of mind and without *Atma-vichara*, the mere adoption of any of the four *Asramas* does not remove one's attachment to the body. Because this attachment is really a complex of the mind, whereas, the symbols of *Asrama* life and their respective rules of conduct,—except in so far as the latter go to purify the mind,—pertain merely to the body and are external. Certainly, mere conformity to external rules of conduct, much less the wearing of the symbols of a particular *Asrama*, cannot remove the attachments that are of the mind. (*Ibid*)

One who truly renounces actually merges in the world and expands his love so as to embrace the whole world. He who renounces the immediate ties, actually extends his affection and love to the whole of creation. Great souls who have given up secular life did so not out of mere aversion to family life, but because of the large-hearted and expanded love towards all humanity and to all creation. When you really feel that equal love for all, when your heart has expanded so as to embrace the whole of creation, you will certainly not feel like giving up this or that. You will merely drop off from secular life as the ripe fruit does from the stem of a tree. You will have the conviction that all the world is your home. (*Self-Realisation*)

Since one's attachments are really due to the mind being unripe and impure, which, in its turn, is due to want of *Atma-vichara,* they can be removed only when the mind becomes ripe and pure, and when one takes up the practice of *Atma-vichara.* (*Spiritual Instruction*)

Sannyasa truly consists in getting rid of *sankalpa* and *vikalpa* which busily engage the mind and which constitute really the 'family of attachments'. In other words, Renunciation consists in renouncing family attachments *of the mind,* so that the mind can be made to abide firmly in the Self. (*Ibid*)

3. The true significance of Sannyasa or Renunciation is to deny the ego-self.

If you understand that the world you seek to renounce is only in your mind, you will also understand what true Renunciation is. The world is unreal and impermanent. It does not speak out saying 'Here I am the world'. If it does so, it would be ever there, making its presence felt by you even in your sleep. Since, however, it is not there in sleep, it is impermanent. Being impermanent it is also unreal. Since it has no reality apart from the Self, it is easily subdued by the Self. The Self alone is real and permanent. Renunciation is the non-identification of the Self with the not-Self. When the ignorance which identifies the Self with the not-Self is removed, not-Self ceases to exist, and that is true Renunciation. (*Maharshi's Gospel, Bk. I*)

Therefore, *Sannyasa* or Renunciation is not the discarding of external things, but the cancellation of the uprising of the ego. To such true Renouncers there is no difference between solitude and active life. (*Ibid*)

4. True solitude is within, and work is no hindrance to serenity of mind.

Solitude is in the mind of man. One might be in the thick of the world and yet maintain perfect serenity of mind. Such a person is always in solitude. Another may stay in the forest but still be unable to control his mind. He cannot be said to be in solitude.

(*Maharshi's Gospel*, *Bk. I*)

Solitude is an attitude of the mind; a man attached to the things of life cannot get solitude, wherever he may be. A detached man is always in solitude. (*Ibid*)

The *Atman* or Self is all-pervasive. Therefore no particular place can be allocated for leading a life of solitude. To abide in the tranquil state which is devoid of thought is verily leading a life of solitude and seclusion. (*Ibid*)

The Self is all; you are not apart from it, and all actions will go on whether you strain yourself to be engaged in them or not. Because you now identify yourself with the body, you think that the work is done by you. But the body and its activities, including the work you do, are not apart from the Self. (*Ibid*)

Truly, it is not the world or the work that is the hindrance to *Atmanishtha*. The feeling 'I work' is the hindrance. Ask yourself 'Who works?' Remember who you are. Then the work will not bind you; it will go on automatically. (*Ibid*)

Make no effort either to work or to renounce; your effort is the bondage. What is destined to happen will happen. If you are destined not to work, work cannot be had even if you hunt for it; if you are destined to work, you will not be able to avoid it; you will be forced to engage yourself in it. So leave it to the Higher Power; you cannot renounce or retain as you choose. (*Ibid*)

Work performed with attachment is a shackle, whereas work performed with detachment does not affect the doer. He is, even while working, in solitude. (*Ibid*)

To be engaged in your duty is true *namaskar*, and abiding in God or Self is the only *asan*. (*Ibid*)

Nor is it necessary for you to go into seclusion in order to carry on meditation. Because, meditation is your true nature. You call it meditation now, since you are distracted by other thoughts. When these thoughts are dispelled, you remain alone, that is, in the state of meditation free from thoughts; and that is your real nature, which you are now trying to gain by keeping away other thoughts. Such keeping away of other thoughts is now called meditation. But when the practice becomes firm, the real nature shows itself as true meditation. (*Ibid*)

5. Through selfless activity the wise Grihastha destroys the ego.

The ego is the source of thought. It creates the body and the world, and it makes you think of being a *Brahmachari*, *Grihastha* etc. If you renounce, It will only substitute the thought of *Sannyasa* for those of *Brahmachari*, *Grihastha* etc., and the environment of the forest for that of the household. But the mental obstacles are always there for you. They even increase greatly in the new surroundings. It is no help to change the environment. (*Maharshi's Gospel*, *Bk. I*)

The one obstacle is the mind; it must be got over whether in the home or in the forest. If you can do it in the forest, why not in the home? (*Ibid*)

Your duty is TO BE, and not to be this or that. "I AM THAT I AM" sums up the whole truth; the method is summarised in BE STILL. (*Ibid*)

And what does Stillness mean? It means 'Destroy yourself'; because every name and form is the cause of trouble. (*Ibid*)

'I—I' is the Self. 'I am this' is the ego. When the 'I' is kept up as the 'I' only, it is the Self. When it flies off at a tangent and says 'I am this or that', 'I am such and such',—it is the ego. (*Ibid*)

It is quite possible for the wise *Grihastha* to discharge his duties in life, (which, after all, fall to his lot due to his *prarabdha* or destiny), without any attachment, considering himself as merely instrumental for the purpose. Only to the on-looker would the enlightened householder appear, to be thus busily engaged in his household activity. Really, he is not engaged in any kind of activity whatsoever. (*Spiritual Instruction*)

Any activity as such is not an obstacle in the way of attaining *Jnana*. Nor does *Jnana* stand in the way of discharging one's duties in life. *Jnana* and *karma* are never mutually antagonistic; Realization of the one is not an obstacle for the performance of the other, and *vice versa*. Indeed, an *Atma-jnani* alone can be a good *karma-yogi*. (*Ibid*)

Therefore, the outward activity of a wise householder does not at all stand in his way of realizing, even while he is thus busily engaged, the perfect peace of retirement. (*Ibid*)

6. Peace is the goal to be realized, whether it is for the individual or for the society.

Peace is for self-purification; power is for the improvement of the society. Having advanced the interests of the society by means of power, peace should be established there later. (*Sri Ramana Gita*)

Society is the body; its constituent members are the limbs, and their duties are its functions. A member of a society thrives when, through selfless service, he is loyal to it, just as the limbs thrive, when by sound co-ordination they function well within the body. (*Ibid*)

While serving the society faithfully in thought, word and deed, a member of it should also promote its cause among the other members of his community by awakening them to similar service. (*Ibid*)

The promotion of universality and brotherhood is the high ideal of society. (*Ibid*)

But the highest benefit that can be conferred on man is Happiness and Happiness is born of Peace. Peace can reign only when there is no disturbance, and disturbance is due to thoughts that arise in the mind. When the mind itself is absent, there will be perfect Peace. Unless a person annihilates the mind, he cannot gain Peace and be Happy. And unless he himself be Happy, he cannot bestow Happiness on 'others.' Since, however, there are no 'others' for the Sage, who has no mind, the mere fact of His Realization is itself enough to make 'others' Happy. (*Maharshi's Gospel, Bk. I*)

There is no explaining these things. The existence of a separate, individual consciousness is not a necessary postulate for helping 'others.' You are the world and the world is you. You do not help the world at all by wishing or trying to do so, but only by helping yourself, that is, by realizing your Perfection. (*Ibid*)

It is useless to speculate, useless to try and take a mental or intellectual grasp and work from that. That is only formal religion, a code for children and for social life, a guide to help us to avoid shocks, so that the inside fire may burn up the nonsense in us and teach us a little sooner common sense, the knowledge of the delusion of separateness. Religion, whether it is Christianity, Buddhism, Hinduism, Theosophy or any other kind of 'Ism' or 'Sophy' or system, can only take us to the one point where all religions meet and no further. (*Ibid*)

Truly, your own Realization is best help you can possibly render to 'others.' Those who have discovered great truths have done so in the still depths of the Self. (*Ibid*)

In fact, there are no 'others' to be helped. For, the realized being sees only the Self, just as the goldsmith

sees only the gold while valuing it in various jewels made of gold. When you identify yourself with the body name and form are there. But when you transcend the body-consciousness, the 'others'. also disappear. The Enlightened One does not see the world as different from himself.
(*Ibid*)

Conclusion

> It is within the power of every individual to make the earnest and incessant endeavour to eradicate the ego—the cause of all misery—by cancelling all mental activity born of the ego.
>
> Can obsessing thought arise without the ego, and can there be illusion apart from such thought?
>
> (*Self-Enquiry*)

VI

THE MIND

1. One cannot overcome illusion or maya unless one knows the true nature of the mind.

The term 'mind' truly signifies the universal principle underlying the correspondence between the ideas 'within' and the objects 'without.' Therefore, the body and the world, which appear as external to oneself are in fact mere mental reflections. (*Self-Enquiry*)

It is only the Self or Heart that manifests in all these forms. In the core of the all-comprehensive Heart there is the self-luminous 'I—I' ever shining. (*Ibid*)

According to Hindu Scriptures the entity known as the 'mind' is derived from the subtle essences of the food consumed, and it flourishes as love, hatred, lust, anger and so on. It is really the totality of mind, intellect, memory, will and ego: and although it has these diverse aspects, it bears the generic name 'mind.' It is this very same mind that becomes objectified as insentient objects cognized by us. Though itself insentient, it (the mind) appears sentient being associated with Consciousness, like the red-hot iron appearing as fire. (*Ibid*)

The mind is located in the Heart, like sight in the eye, hearing in the ear etc. The principle of differentiation is inherent in it. It is also the mind that gives its character to the individual; and when it cognizes an object already associated with the conscious principle of intellection, it assumes a thought form. It gets into contact with the object through the five senses operated by the brain, and appropriates such cognizance to itself with the feeling 'I am cognizant of such and such a thing.' It then enjoys the object and is satisfied, or suffers from the object and is dissatisfied. (*Ibid*)

The senses, being located externally as aids to the cognition of objects, are exterior; the mind being internal, is the inner sense. (*Ibid*)

Such are the nature and functions of the mind: and this mind must be metamorphosed into the Self. (*Ibid*)

2. The sense of individuality is the result of impurity of the mind.

The mind is no other than the I–thought. The mind and the ego are one and the same. Intellect, will, ego and individuality are collectively the same mind. It is like a man being variously described according to his different activities. The individual is no other than the ego, which, again, is only the mind. Simultaneously with the rise of the ego, the mind appears associated with the reflected nature of the Self. (*Self-Enquiry*)

Just as water in the pot reflects the enormous sun within the narrow limits of the pot, even so the *vasanas* or latent tendencies of the mind, acting as the reflecting medium, catch the all-pervading, infinite Light of Consciousness arising from the Heart, and present in the form of a reflection the phenomenon called the mind.

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Seeing only this reflection, the *ajnani* is deluded into the belief that he is a finite being, the *jiva*.

(*Maharshi's Gospel, Bk. II*)

3. Rajas and tamas are the contaminating qualities of the mind: but the quality of sattva is its real nature.

Mind is, in reality, only Consciousness, because it is pure and transparent by nature; in that pure state, however, it cannot be called mind. The wrong identification of one thing with another (for instance, of pure Consciousness with the ego-self and the body), is the work of the contaminated mind. That is to say, when the mind becomes oblivious of its primary nature, it is overpowered by *tamas* (the quality of darkness) and manifests as the physical world; similarly, overpowered by *rajas* (the quality of activity), it identifies itself with the body, and appearing in the manifested world as 'I', mistakes it to be real. Swayed by love and hatred, it performs good and bad actions, and, as a result, is caught up in the cycle of births and deaths. (*Self-Enquiry*)

Because the quality of purity, *sattva*, is the real nature of the mind, clearness like that of the sky is the characteristic of the mind-expanse.

(Since the mind derives its qualities partly from the food consumed), regulation of the diet restricting it to simple and nutritious food taken in moderate quantities, is considered the best of all rules of conduct. Such diet-regulation is most conducive to the development of the *satvic* qualities of the mind. These, in their turn, assist the aspirant in his practice of *Atma-vichara*.

(*"Who am I?"*)

There are not two minds, one good and the other evil. Only the *vasanas* or tendencies of the mind are of two kinds,—good and favourable, evil and unfavourable. When the mind is associated with the former, it is called good; when it is associated with the latter it is called evil. (*Ibid*)

4. The mind must become pure (satvic) before it can realize the Truth.

Just as fine silk threads cannot be woven with the use of a heavy iron shuttle, or the delicate shades of a piece of art be distinguished in the light of a lamp agitated by the wind, so is realization of Truth impossible with the mind rendered gross and obtuse by *tamas*, and restless and unsteady by *rajas*. Because, Truth is exceedingly subtle and serene. (*Self Enquiry*)

The mind will be cleared of its impurities only by a desireless performance of man's duties during several births, getting a worthy Master, obtaining his instructions and incessantly practising meditation on the Supreme. Then the mind regains its subtlety and composure. The Bliss of the pure Self can manifest only in a mind that has become subtle and steady through assiduous practice of meditation. (*Ibid*)

Because the mind alone constitutes the root-principles manifesting as the individual, God and the world, its absorption and dissolution in the Self as pure Consciousness is the final emancipation known as *Kaivalya*, and it is the Realization of the Supreme Universal Being, the Brahman. (*Ibid*)

Conclusion

The world is nothing more than a collection of the objects of the five-fold sense-perception. Since it is the mind alone that sees the world through the five sense-organs, is the world anything but the mind? (*Sat Darshan*)

Although the world and knowledge thereof rise and set together, by knowledge alone is the world made apparent. That perfection whence the world and knowledge thereof rise, wherein they set, and which Itself shines without rising and setting, that pure Consciousness is the one Reality. (*Ibid*)

VII

THE THREE STATES OF THE MIND

AND

The Mindless State

1. The Self is absolute and transcends the three states of the mind.

The ever-luminous Self is one and universal. Notwithstanding the individual's experience of the three states, waking, dreaming and deep sleep, the Self remains pure and changeless. It is not limited by the three bodies, physical, mental and causal; and it transcends the triple relation of the seer, sight and the seen.

(*Maharshi's Gospel, Bk. II*)

The apparent subjectivity of the Self as the Seer exists only on the plane of relativity and vanishes in the Absolute, because there is, in truth, no other than the Self or pure Consciousness. (*Ibid*)

2. Owing to one's ignorance of the Self the wakeful world appears real during the waking state, just as the dream-world appears real during the dream state. Both are but projections of the mind.

The mind is a unique power (*sakti*) in the *Atman*, whereby thoughts occur to oneself. When the subtle mind forsakes its identity with the Self, and becomes externalized in the form of thought etc., it sees the world as an objective reality. When the world is thus perceived, the true nature of the Self is not revealed; conversely, when the Self is realized, the world ceases to appear as an objective reality. ("*Who am I?*")

There is no such thing as physical world apart from and independent of thought. In deep sleep there are no thoughts, nor is there the world. In the wakeful and dreaming states thoughts are present, and there is also the world. Just as the spider draws out the thread of the cobweb from within itself and withdraws it again into itself, even so out of itself the mind projects the world and absorbs it back into itself. Except that the wakeful state is long and the dream-state is short, there is no difference between the two. In the wakeful as well as in the dreaming state thoughts on the one hand, and name and form on the other, occur simultaneously. (*Ibid*)

The world of wakeful experience as well as the dream-world are but creations of the mind; and so long as the mind is engrossed in either, it finds itself unable to deny the reality of the dream-world while dreaming, and of the wakeful world while awake.
(*Maharshi's Gospel, Bk. II*)

While you were dreaming, the dream was a perfectly integrated whole. That is to say, if you felt thirsty in a dream, the illusory drinking of illusory water did quench your illusory thirst. But all this was real and not illusory to you so long as you did not know that the dream itself was an illusion. Similarly it is with the wakeful world: the sensations you now have get co-ordinated to give you the impression that the world is real. In other words, the dream as a dream does not permit you to doubt its reality, even so, you are unable to doubt the reality of the world of your wakeful experience. (*Ibid*)

If you withdraw your mind completely from the world, turn it within and abide thus, that is, if you keep awake always to the Self alone, which is the Substratum of your experience, you will find the world, of which you are now aware, just as unreal as the world in which you lived in your dream. (*Ibid*)

3. When the mind is absorbed in the pure Light of Consciousness the world ceases to appear as an objective reality.

The *Jnani* is always steadily fixed in the grandeur of the Self only, the world not being considered unreal or different from the Self. The sense of differentiation is characteristic of the mind, whereas to those who abide in the Heart, the seer and the seen merge and unite as one. (*Sri Ramana Gita*)

Not realizing the Self as the true Source of consciousness, the ignorant man is led by the mind to differentiate the world and is thus deluded. He sees only the mind which is a mere reflection of the Light of pure Consciousness arising from the Heart. Of the Heart Itself he is ignorant, because his mind is extraverted and has never sought its Source. (*Ibid*)

When the mind gets absorbed in the Heart, the ego or the 'I' which is the centre of the multitude of thoughts vanishes, and pure Consciousness or the Self, which subsists during all the states of the mind, alone remains resplendent. It is this State, where there is not the slightest trace of the I-thought, that is the true Being of oneself. It is the undifferentiated Light of pure Consciousness into which the reflected light of the mind is completely absorbed. (*Maharshi's Gospel, Bk. II*)

4. The three states of the mind are of no value or significance to the Enlightened One.

The Reality or pure Consciousness is eternal by its nature and, therefore, subsists equally during what are called the waking, dreaming and sleep states. To him who is one with that Reality, there is neither the mind nor the three states, and, therefore, neither introversion nor extraversion. His is the Ever-Waking State, because he is Awake to the eternal Self; his is the ever-dreaming State, because to him the world is no better than a dream; his is the ever-sleeping State, because he is at all times without the 'body-am-I' consciousness.

(*Maharshi's Gospel, Bk. II*)

As a matter of fact, actions and states are according to one's view-point. A crow, an elephant, and a snake, each makes use of one limb for two alternate purposes. With one eye the crow can look on either side: for the elephant the trunk serves the purpose of both a hand and a nose, and the serpent sees as well as hears with its eyes. Whether you say the crow has an eye or eyes, or refer to the trunk of the elephant as its hand or nose, or call the eyes of the serpent its ears, it means all the same. Similarly in the case of *Jnani's* attitude towards the world, sleep-waking or waking-sleep or dream-sleep or dreaming-wakefulness, are all much the same thing. It is quite immaterial whether the world is seen by the *Jnani* or *ajnani*. It is seen by both, but their view-points differ. (*Maharshi's Gospel, Bk. I*)

5. To the Jnani the world appears like a picture-show.

Seeing the world the *Jnani* sees the Self, which is the Substratum of both the seer and the seen; the *ajnani*, whether he sees the world or not, is ignorant of his true Being, the Self. (*Maharshi's Gospel, Bk. II*)

Take the instance of moving pictures on the screen in the cinema-show. Before the play begins, what do you see in front of you? Merely the screen. On that screen you see the entire show, and for all appearances, the pictures are real. But go and try to take hold of them. What do you take hold of? Merely the screen, on which the pictures appeared so real. After the play, when the pictures disappear, what remains? The screen again (*Maharshi's Gospel, Bk. I*)

So with the Self. That alone exists; the pictures come and go. If you hold on to the Self, you will not be deceived by the appearance of the pictures. Nor does it matter at all if the pictures appear or disappear. Ignoring the Self, the *ajnani* thinks the world is real just as ignoring the screen, he sees merely the pictures, as if they existed apart from it. If one knows that without the Seer there is nothing to be seen, just as there are no pictures without the screen, one is not deluded. The *Jnani* knows that the screen, the pictures and the sight thereof are but the Self. With the pictures the Self is in its manifest form, without the pictures it remains in the unmanifest form. To the *Jnani* it is quite immaterial if the Self is in the one form or the other. He is always the Self. (*Maharshi's Gospel, Bk. II*)

6. As long as man is aware of the mind only, he cannot but consider that sleep is a state of ignorance, because mind does not function during sleep. If one's true Being beyond the mind is realized, sleep ceases to be a state of ignorance.

Sleep is not ignorance, it is one's pure state ; wakefulness is not knowledge, it is ignorance. There is full awareness in sleep and total ignorance in waking.
(*Maharshi's Gospel, Bk. I*)

Your sense of ignorance during sleep is due to the absence of mind at that time. Now while awake, who speaks of your unawareness in sleep? It is your mind. But in your sleep your mind could not function. How can it speak about your awareness or otherwise during the sleep-state ? (*Maharshi's Gospel, Bk. II*)

What you were really unaware of in sleep, is your bodily existence, not of your own existence, which is eternal. Your real nature covers both knowledge and ignorance and extends beyond them also. It is *Prajnana* which ever subsists, unaffected by the three transitory states of the mind. It is also beyond them, because It can subsist without them and in spite of them. (*Ibid*)

Sleep, dream and waking states are only modes passing before the Self ; they proceed whether you are aware of them or not. That is the state of the *Jnani*, in whom pass the states of *Samadhi*, waking, dream and deep sleep, like the bulls moving, standing or being unyoked, while the passenger in the cart is asleep.
(*Maharshi's Gospel, Bk. I*)

7. The Jnani is ever awake to the Self alone, and looks at the world with unconcern.

A traveller in a cart has fallen asleep. The bulls move, stand still or are unyoked during the journey. He does not know these events, but finds himself in a different place after he wakes up. He has been blissfully ignorant of the occurrences on the way, but the journey has been finished. Similarly with the Self of a person. The ever-wakeful Self is compared to the traveller asleep in the cart. The waking state is the moving of the bulls; *Samadhi* is their standing still, (because *Samadhi* means *Jagrat-sushupti*, that is, the person is aware of but not concerned with the action; the bulls are yoked but do not move); sleep is the unyoking of the bulls, for there is complete stopping of activity corresponding to the relief of the bulls from the yoke. The traveller sleeping in the moving cart is not aware of the motion of the cart, because his mind is sunk in darkness. Whereas, the *Sahaja Jnani* remains unaware of his bodily activities, because his mind is dead having been resolved into the ecstasy of *Chidananda* or Bliss of the Self.

(*Maharshi's Gospel, Bk. I*)

8. Kevala Nirvikalpa Samadhi (the State in which the world is not perceived) is only a stage leading to Sahaja Nirvikalpa Samadhi, which is the highest Realization.

In *Kevala Nirvikalpa Samadhi* the mind *lies immersed* in the Light of the Self (whereas the same, that is, the mind, lies in the darkness of ignorance in deep sleep); and the subject makes a distinction between *Samadhi* and activity after waking up from *Samadhi*. Moreover, activity of the body, of seeing, hearing etc., and of the mind, all these are obstructions for one who seeks to realize *Kevala Nirvikalpa Samadhi.* (*Maharshi's Gospel, Bk. I*)

In *Sahaja Nirvikalpa Samadhi* the mind is *resolved into* the Self, and thus totally lost. The differences and obstruction mentioned above do not, therefore, exist here. The activities of such a Being are like the feeding of a somnolent boy, perceptible to the on-looker but not to the subject. (*Ibid*)

By its very nature, the state of *Kevala Nirvikalpa Samadhi* is not continuous and unbroken; that is, it does not subsist while the senses and the mind are active. It cannot, therefore, be the ever-existent, natural State. Due to *prarabdha* this state of *Kevala Nirvikalpa Samadhi* occurs to some with a limited duration, or may even subsist until death; but in any case it cannot be called the final State of Realization. Moreover, since that state, as is admitted, cannot subsist when the body, mind and the senses are active, how can it be called Perfect? Really, *prarabdha* alone is responsible for the activity or otherwise of a *Jnani.* Great Sages have, therefore, declared that the natural, spontaneous and changeless State of Abidance in the Self or *Sahajatmanishtha* is the supreme and final State.

(*Spiritual Instruction*)

Conclusion

> Realization is nothing to be gained afresh. It is already there. Stillness or Peace is Realization.
>
> There is never a moment when the Self is not. It is ever-present, here and now. If it were not so, but attainable by some effort at some time, and if it were new and had to be acquired, it would not be worth pursuit. Because, what is got afresh will also be lost. What is not natural (*Sahaja*) is not permanent either.
>
> So, I say the Self is not reached. You *are* the Self. You are already and eternally That.

(*Maharshi's Gospel, Bk. I*)

APPENDIX

THE JIVANMUKTA

An Extract from Brihat Yoga Vasishtha

Below is given an extract from the clear and scientific analysis of Brihat Yoga Vasishtha (with the references omitted) from the pen of the eminent scholar Dr. B. L. Atreya, M.A., D. Litt. of the Benares Hindu University.

" The life in which a Sage experiences the last stage of Self-realization is the last life of individuality, which, from the stand-point of his subjective experience, he has already transcended and negated, but which, objectively, still continues as a material effect of his previous willing in the form of his life. It is a shadow in the material world, as it were, of the previous subjective individuality which is no longer in existence. Thoughts, it seems, take time to be materialised in the objective world, like the light of distant stars in reaching our eyes. It is possible that a star, whose light is reaching us now, and so giving us the impression of its present existence, may have been long ago effaced out of its existence, if it was distant enough. To us the existence of such a star is a fact, but in the world where the star actually was, it is no longer in existence and no longer to be perceived as such. So is the case with the individuality of a *Jivanmukta*, a Sage whose individuality has been totally dissolved and who actually does not feel to be an individual in the world of

Spirit and Thought, but who appears to be living, nay, actually lives in the physical world, as an effect, as a passing shadow, of his previous individuality. His life is a reality to others, but an appearance in his mind, and unreal for his Self in which he now has his conscious being. This, in brief, is the idea of *Jivanmukti*, the Liberation of One who is yet living, according to Yoga Vasishtha. A large number of verses is devoted to the description of such a life. We give below a brief description of how such a Sage lives and behaves in the world.

"Pleasures do not delight him, pains do not distress. There is no feeling of like or dislike produced in his mind even towards serious, violent and continued states of pleasure or pain. Although externally engaged in the worldly actions, he has no attachment in his mind to any object whatsoever. His conduct does not annoy anybody, he behaves like an ideal citizen and a friend of all. Outwardly he is very busy, but very calm and quiet at heart. He is free from the restrictions of caste, creed, stages of life (*asrama*), custom and Scriptures. He rests unagitated in Supreme Bliss. He does not work to get anything for himself. He is ever happy and never hangs his joy on anything else. His face is never without the lustre of cheerfulness on it. He behaves with other fellow-beings as the occasion and the status of the person demand, without the least stain on his mind. He plays as a child in the company of children; he is a youth among the young; and he acts as an old man in the company of the aged ones. He is full of courage in the party of courageous people, and shares the misery of the miserable ones. There is nothing which he has to achieve. He therefore performs and gives up actions without much concern like children. In spite of his being occupied with actions appropriate to the time, place and circumstances, he is untouched by pleasure or pain arising from them. He never feels despondent, proud, agitated, cast down, troubled or elated. He is full of mercy or magnanimity even when surrounded by enemies. He regards his activities as a part of the Cosmic Movement and performs them without any personal desire. He never hankers for the pleasures that are not in his hand, but enjoys all those he has. The idea of "*I*" and "*Mine,*" of something to be achieved and something to be avoided, has died in him. For the Sage himself, no purpose is served by any activity, nor abstaining from activity. He therefore, acts as the occasion suits him. Even doing all sorts of actions, the Liberated One is always in *Samadhi*. He is a *Maha Karta* (Great Worker). He works without any anxiety, egoistic feeling, pride or impurity of heart. He is a *Maha Bhokta* (Great Enjoyer). He does not discard the pleasures he has got, nor desire for the pleasures he has not got. He finds equal pleasure in old age, death, misery, poverty or in ruling over an empire. He eats with equal gusto the eatables of all tastes, of ordinary or superior quality. He does not make any of the natural functions of his body paralyse for want of proper exercise. His body is a kingdom unto him, over which he rules wisely and well. He keeps it healthy and does not starve it of the appropriate requirements. So far as the external behaviour (*vyavahara*) is concerned, no difference appears between the Liberated and the ignorant. The difference, however, consists in the presence of desire in the case of the latter and its total absence in the former. The life of a Liberated Sage is really the noblest and the happiest life. From him Goodness is scattered all round. Having seen him, having heard about him, having met him, and having remembered him, all creatures feel delighted. He has no longer any struggle for livelihood. The guardian angels of the world protect and support him, as they do the entire Cosmos."

Books mentioned on pp. 48 to 88 as the Sources of the extracts containing the Teachings of the Sage are Sri Ramanasramam Publications. —[Ed.]